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THE TRANSFORMED YANGTZE THREE GORGES

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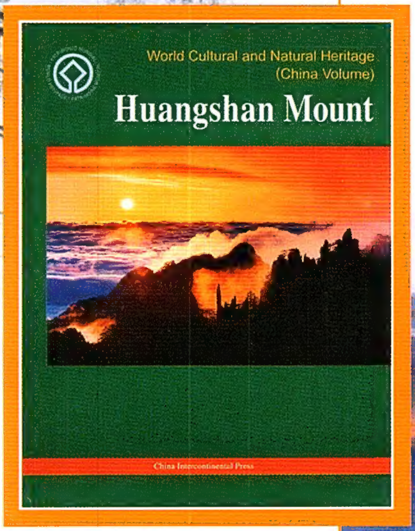
Mt. Huangshan, situated in the south of Anhui Province, is one of the most famous scenic areas in China. Being put into the World Heritage List, it is also granted with two laurels of cultural heritage and natural heritage by the UNESCO's World Heritage Commission.

The landscape of the mountain is a typical granite hoodoo landform shaped during the long geological periods by several tectonic movements in the crust. Mt. Huangshan has long been famous for its strange-looking pine trees, grotesque rocks, sea of clouds and hot springs.

All over one thousand metres above sea level, there are 77 peaks in the scenic area of almost two hundred square kilometres. Granite rock forests and rock columns together with massive rocks scatter everywhere. Moreover, Mt. Huangshan is a diverse ecosystem with a treasure of wildlife. There are approximately 1450 species of plants, 300 species of vertebrates and 170 species of birds.

Combined unique scenery and magnificent sea of clouds, the beauty of Mt. Huangshan has continued to fascinate endless visitors. Catch a glimpse of its glory in this "Huangshan Mount" pictorial that is filled with breath-taking images taken by our team of photographers!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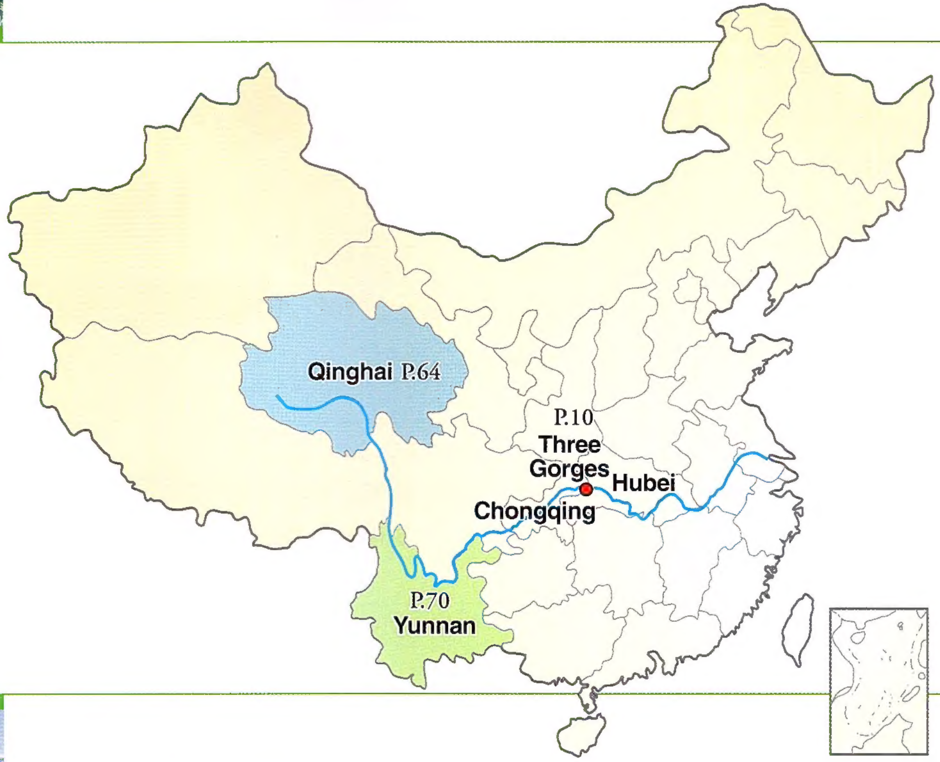

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Photos by Shi Baoxiu Article by Liu Jun

More than a thousand years ago, Tuyuhun's capital was Dulan and it was far removed from the threat of the central kingdoms. It thrived and flourished on this safe land. At its peak, it was a large kingdom spanning 3000 mi east-west and 800 mi north-south, including Gansu, Sichuan and Qinghai provinces.

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O Pu'er Tea, Where Art Thou?

Photos by Shi Baoxiu Article by Liu Jun

Most people believe that Pu'er tea originated from Pu'er County, Yunnan Province. In fact, it is just a beautiful mistake. Pu'er tea actually comes from the regions of Xishangbanna, Simao, and Lincang in Yunnan.

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Photos & Article by Li Youxiang

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Living in the Land of the Pharaohs

Photos & Article by Xiao Ji

Offering luxurious comfort and convenience, the Landmark hotel in Macao is becoming the popular destination of choice for tourists.

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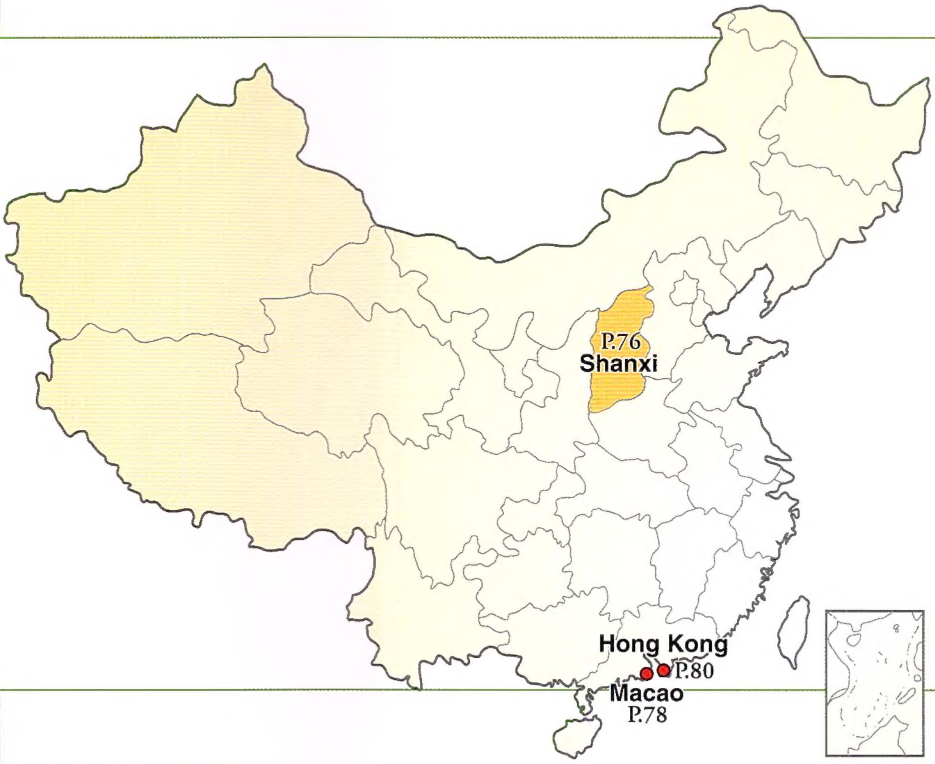
Yangtze Three Gorges
(by Zheng Yunfeng)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Editorial Dept., Business Dept., Advertising Dept., Sales Dept. Tel: (852) 2561 8001
China Tourism Photo Library Tel: (852) 2561 8001
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Hong Kong China Tourism Ltd. (Licence No. 351850) Tel: (852) 2516 9228
Printer: C & C Offset Printing Co. Ltd.
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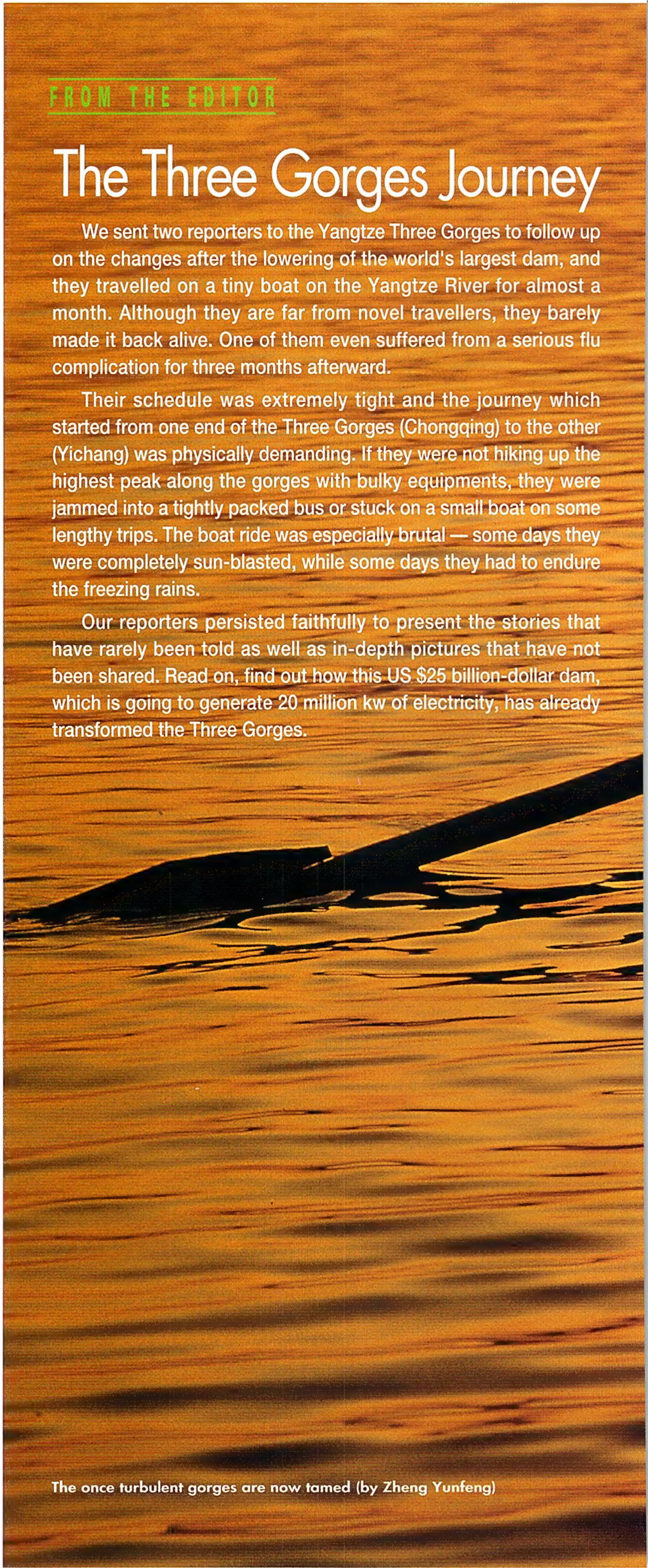
FROM THE EDITOR

The Three Gorges Journey

We sent two reporters to the Yangtze Three Gorges to follow up on the changes after the lowering of the world's largest dam, and they travelled on a tiny boat on the Yangtze River for almost a month. Although they are far from novel travellers, they barely made it back alive. One of them even suffered from a serious flu complication for three months afterward.

Their schedule was extremely tight and the journey which started from one end of the Three Gorges (Chongqing) to the other (Yichang) was physically demanding. If they were not hiking up the highest peak along the gorges with bulky equipments, they were jammed into a tightly packed bus or stuck on a small boat on some lengthy trips. The boat ride was especially brutal — some days they were completely sun-blasted, while some days they had to endure the freezing rains.

Our reporters persisted faithfully to present the stories that have rarely been told as well as in-depth pictures that have not been shared. Read on, find out how this US $25 billion-dollar dam, which is going to generate 20 million kw of electricity, has already transformed the Three Gorges.


The once turbulent gorges are now tamed (by Zheng Yunfeng)

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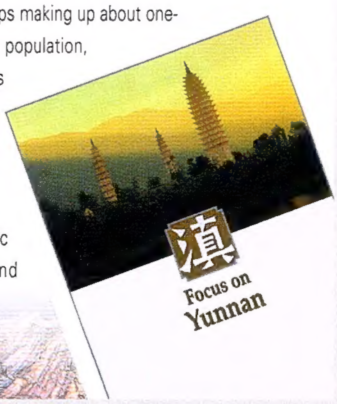
Focus on Yunnan

The mountainous wonderland of Yunnan enjoys a favourable warm climate year round. Its capital, Kunming, sitting alongside Yunnan's largest lake, Dianchi, has the honourable name of "Spring City". The province is full of natural wonders and cultural relics, such as the Stone Forests, the Shangri-La, and the ancient cities of Dali and Lijiang. With over 20 diverse ethnic groups making up about one-third of the population, opportunities abound for you to see their characteristic cultures and customs.



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Focus on Fujian

Situated on the southeast coast, Fujian Province overlooks Taiwan Island across the Taiwan Strait. Its mountainous landscape includes the Wuyi Mountain Scenic Area, one of the UN World Heritage sites in China. The province's zigzag coastlines, numerous beaches and charming seas offer spectacular scenic beauty as well as historical and cultural interest in such places as the Drumming Wave Islet in Xiamen and the Mazu Temple in Meizhou Island.

閩
Focus on Fujian

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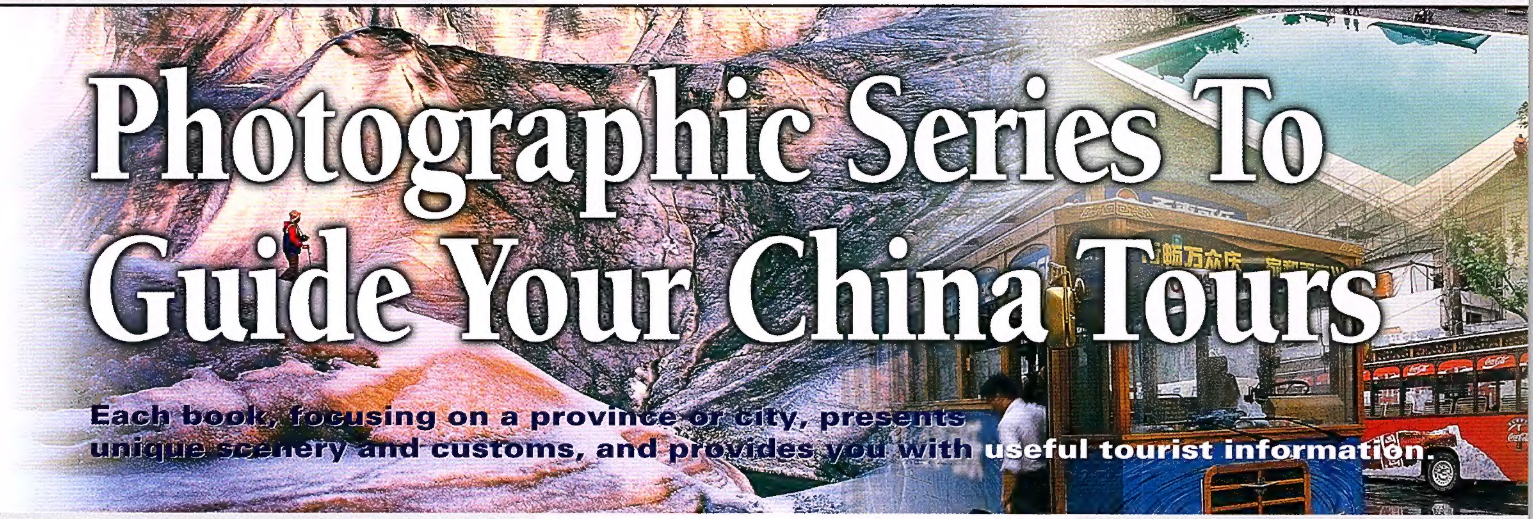
Focus on Shanghai

Shanghai, the largest metropolis i
China, and formerly the Far East financial centre
has experienced dramatic development over the
past century. The world-famous Bund along the
Huangpu River shows you buildings of differen
historical periods and varied architectural styles
while skyscrapers are rising in the new area o
Pudong. Shanghai's multiculturism is seen in its music — operas, nostalgic jazz and discos — and in the busy commercial district of Nanjing and Huaihai roads.

滬
Focus on Shanghai



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Focus on Shaanxi

Shaanxi is the cradle of the Chinese civilisation and Xi'an was the capital of 13 dynasties. This has left Shaanxi a rich legacy of historical sites and cultural relics. In the provincial capital Xi'an, there is the fascinating terracotta army unearthed from the tomb of the First Emperor, Qin Shihuang; the tomb of Tang-dynasty Wu Zetian, China's first empress; and the stele forest. The province's beauty is capped with the sheer cliffs of Mount Huashan and the yellow earth of the Loess Plateau.

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Focus on Guangdong

An important gateway into China, the fertile Pearl River Delta of the southern province of Guangdong fans out from Guangzhou to the South China Sea and borders Hong Kong and Macao. The province's natural scenic spots include the limestone pinnacles of Zhaoqing's Seven Star Crags, the red sandstone of Danxia Mountain, and the volcanic beauty of Xiqiao Mountain. The capital, Guangzhou, offers plenty of history in its museums, temples, mosques and old colonial buildings.

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Focus on Guizhou

Guizhou is a land of splendid natural scenery. Its towering mountains and karst landforms team up with the gurgling rivers and magnificent waterfalls to form a wonderful work of Mother Nature. Huangguoshu Waterfalls and the limestone caves are the province's most frequented scenic spots. The 17 ethnic groups living in the picturesque province further colour the land with vivid customs and joyous festivals. It is its natural beauty and culture that make Guizhou a perfect travel destination.

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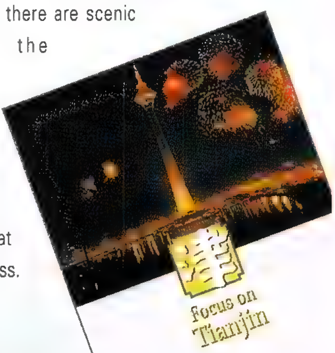
Focus on Tianjin

Tianjin, one of the four municipalities under direct Central Government administration, is an important industrial and commercial centre of China and the biggest port in the north. The history of the city can be found in its Ancient Culture Street, 100-year-old Western-style buildings, Opera Museum and Mazu Temple. Besides the TV Tower and the Haihe River n the city, there are scenic spots in the outskirts, ncluding the Dule Temple and the Great Wall at Huangya Pass.



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Focus on Xinjiang

On the vast land of Xinjiang in Northwest China, there are mountains, basins, deserts and lakes, which provide tourists with numerous attractions — ruins of ancient cities and tombs along the Silk Road; Turpan, an oasis in the desert; Kanas Lake, a gem imbedded in the Altay Mountains; Bayanbulak — the Swan Lake; and the world's second largest desert, the Taklimakan. The minority ethnic groups living in Xinjiang, such as the Uygur, Kazak, Mongolian, Uzbek, Tajik, Xibe, Kirgiz and Tatar, all have their own unique colourful culture.

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Focus on Beijing

Beijing is a metropolis of everlasting charm. There are simply too many captivating things to see, to experience and to taste in this grand city with both old glamour and new mobility. There are historical sites such as the Palace Museum (the Forbidden City), the Temple of Heaven, the Summer Palace, and the Ming Tombs; there are also many scenic spots in its outskirts. Recently, tours have been organised for visitors to taste the real Beijing flavour of life — touring the small back lanes, having tea in a traditional-style teahouse and enjoying the Peking Opera.

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Focus on Shanxi

Shanxi Province, one of the irthplaces of the Chinese civilisation, has mpressive ancient architecture and a wealth of vell-preserved Buddhist temples, monasteries nd grottoes. Among the most famous are the 'ungang Grottoes containing some of China's oldest sculptures and Buddhist art, the Yongle Palace, the Jinci Temple, the Hanging Monastery built on a sheer cliff nd the Wutai Mountain, one of China's most famous sacred Buddhist ands.

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Focus on Guangxi

Unusual topography has endowed the province with numerous spectacular karst formations — limestone caves, pinnacles and rocks. The most famous and enchanting scenic spot is Guilin, and the most travelled route, on the Lijiang River from Guilin to Yangshuo. The coastal city of Beihai has the country's largest beach, the Silver Beach. Other attractions include the varied traditional customs of ethnic minorities, the Sino-Vietnamese border area, and the mysterious Huashan cliff paintings.

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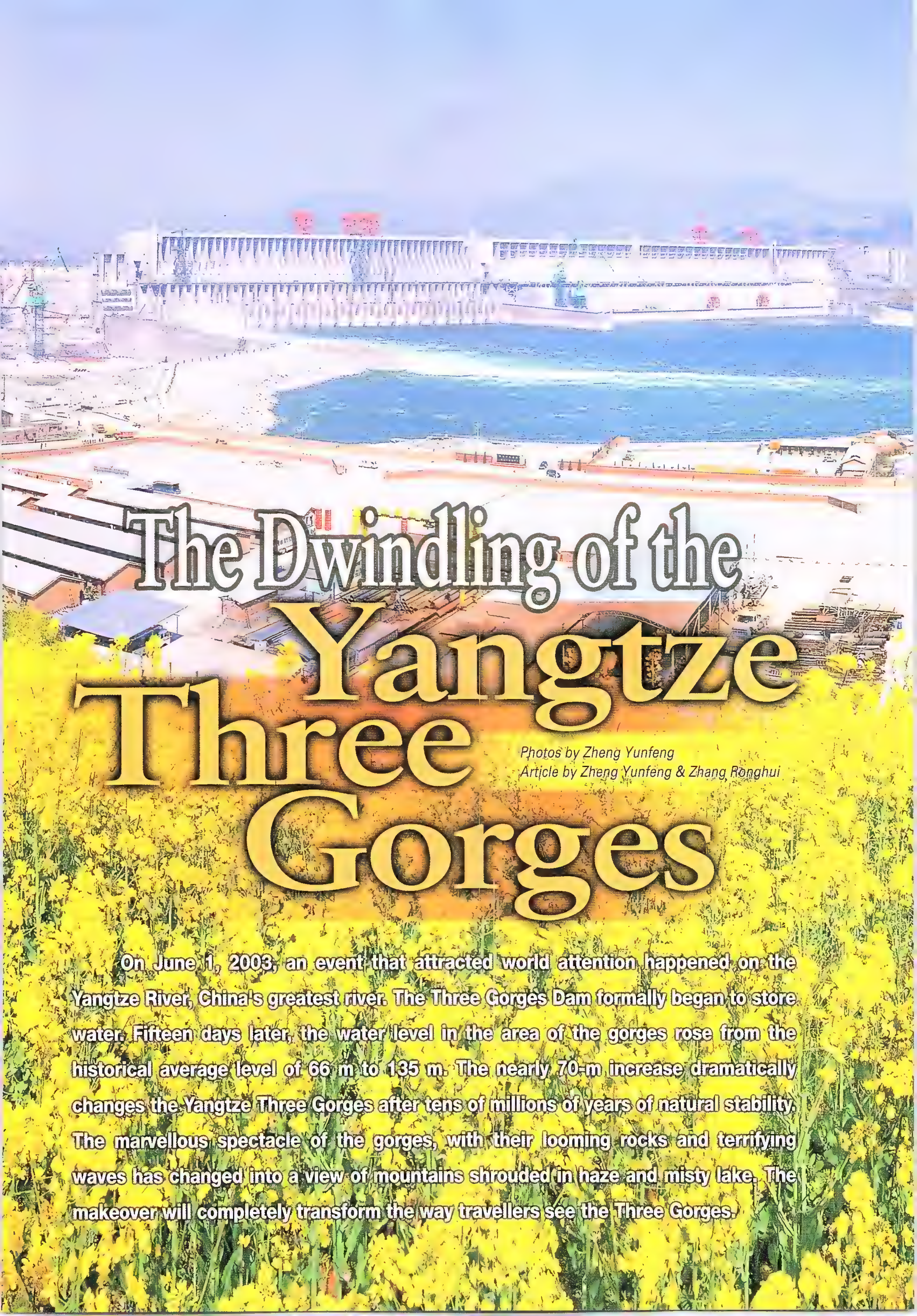
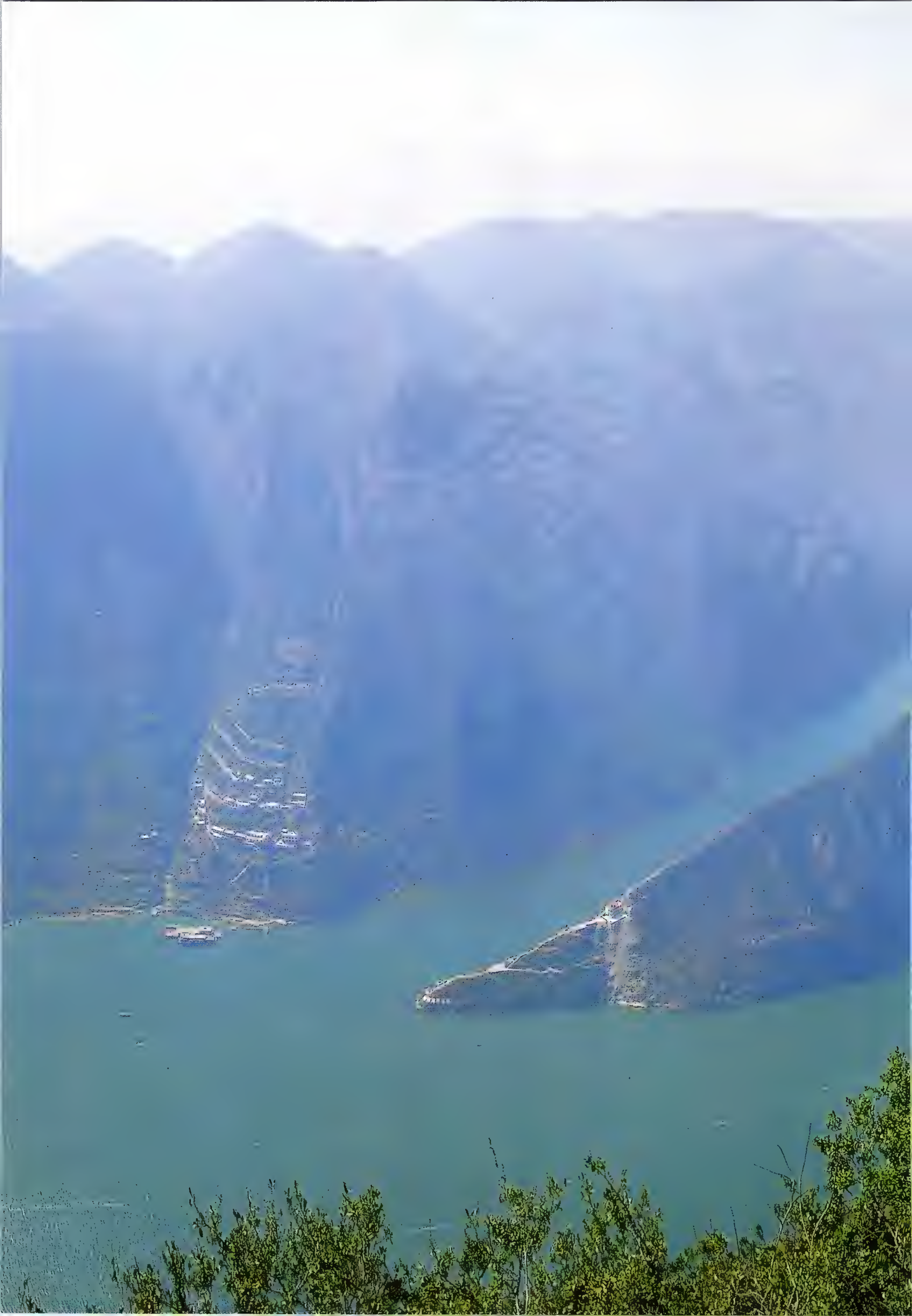


The Dwindling of the Yangtze Three Gorges

Photos by Zheng Yunfeng
Article by Zheng Yunfeng & Zhang Ronghui

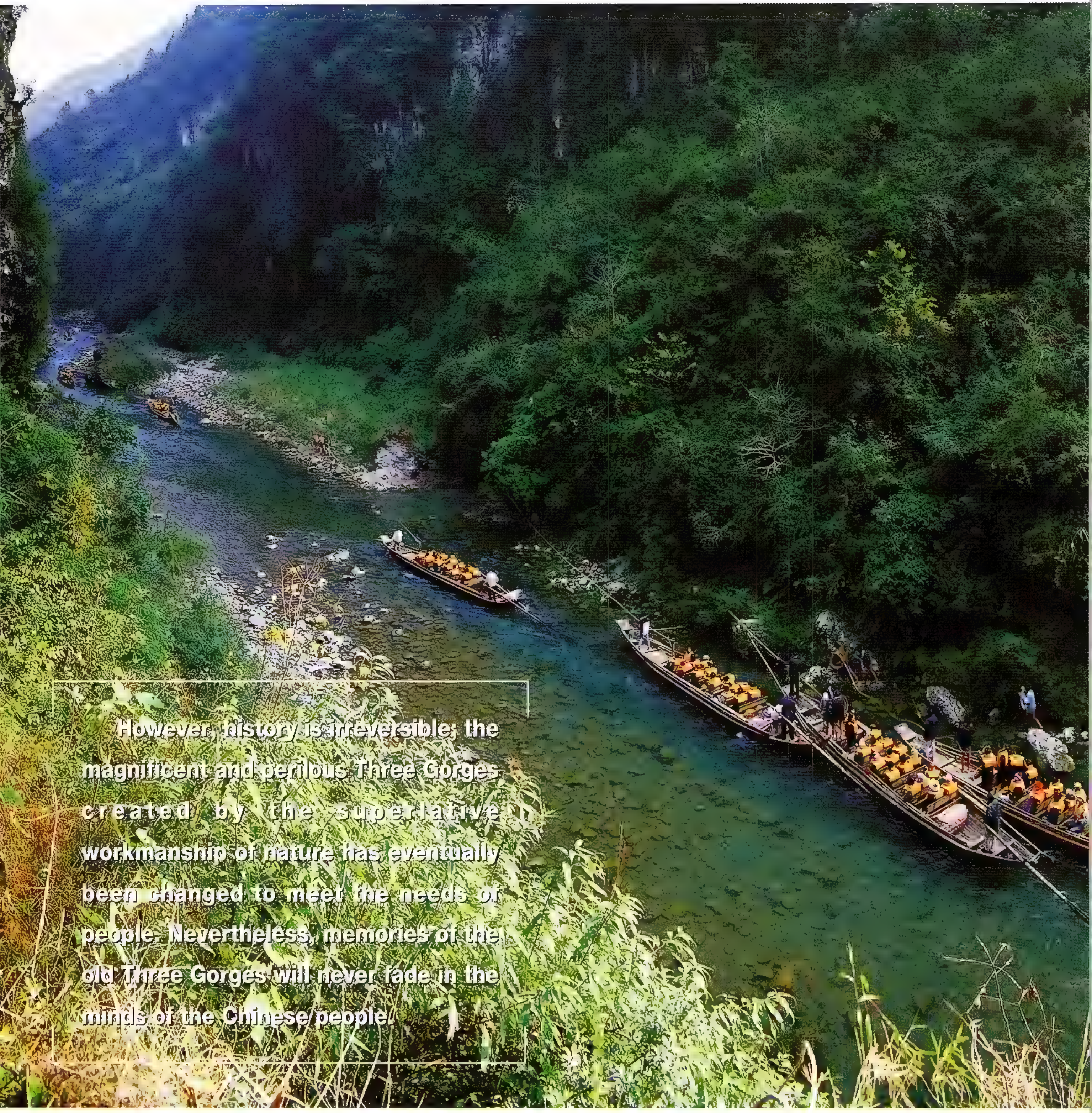
On June 1, 2003, an event that attracted world attention happened on the Yangtze River, China's greatest river. The Three Gorges Dam formally began to store water. Fifteen days later, the water level in the area of the gorges rose from the historical average level of 66 m to 135 m. The nearly 70-m increase dramatically changes the Yangtze Three Gorges after tens of millions of years of natural stability. The marvellous spectacle of the gorges, with their looming rocks and terrifying waves has changed into a view of mountains shrouded in haze and misty lake. The makeover will completely transform the way travellers see the Three Gorges.



The Three Gorges Dam has turned the splendid and hazardous gorges into a gentle and peaceful sight.

We can understand the way ancient people lived by excavation archaeology, but this method is useless to recover the homes of Yangtze Three Gorges. We can appreciate verses handed down by the ancient poets, but we can no longer experience the scenery expressed in their works. We have built block after block of high buildings, but they end up obstructing our view of the plains and the peaceful town dwellings.

The Three Gorges Dam project has completely changed the original face of the site. Travellers have to make mental preparations to suit the reformed landscape when visiting Wuxia Gorge.

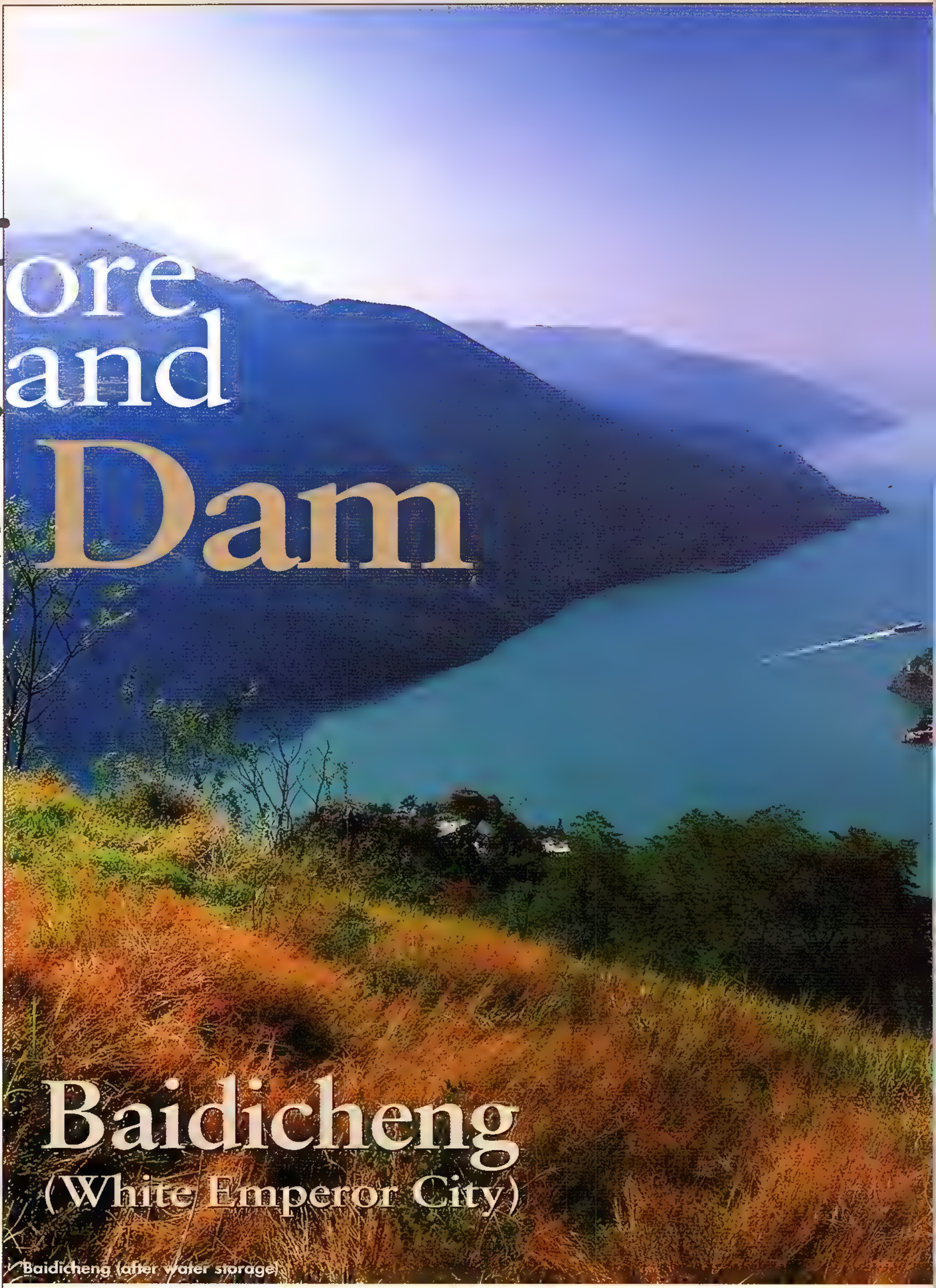


However, history is irreversible; the magnificent and perilous Three Gorges created by the superlative workmanship of nature has eventually been changed to meet the needs of people. Nevertheless, memories of the old Three Gorges will never fade in the minds of the Chinese people.

The small wooden peapod-shaped boats can now only cruise along the tributaries in the upper reaches due to the rise in water level.

Before and After the Dam

Photos by Zheng Yunfeng
Article by Zeng Yunfeng & Zhang Ronghui



Baidicheng
(White Emperor City)

Baidicheng (after water storage)

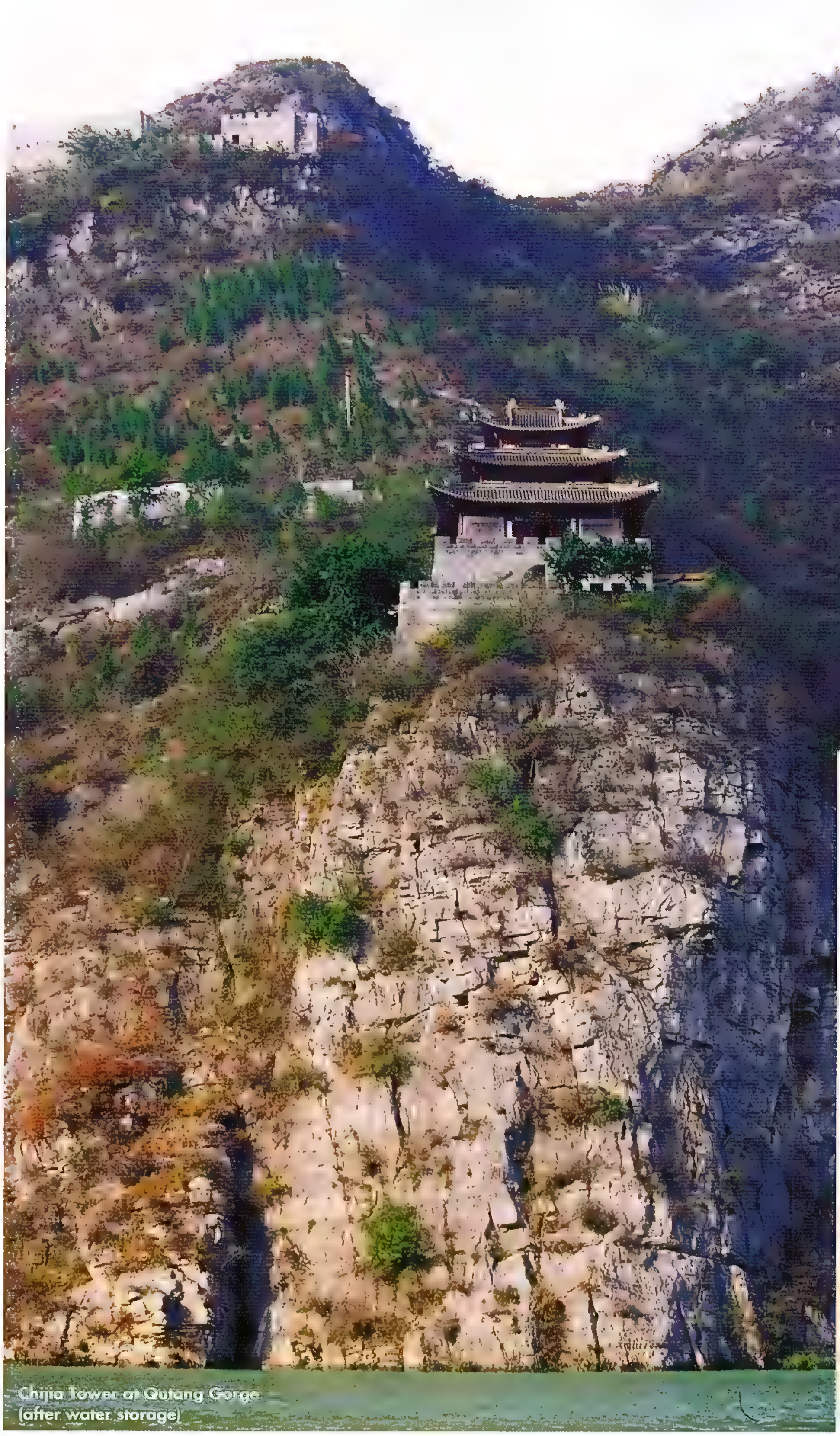
I cannot recall how many times my small boat berthed at the foot of Baidicheng during the past several years. Each time I arrived there, the verse written by an ancient poet, "I bid farewell to Baidicheng in the rosy clouds of dawn", sprang up in my mind.

Now before my eyes is the partly submerged Baidicheng. The lucid blue water and the towers and pavilions add radiance and beauty. The formal mighty river flowing east is no longer to be seen. Instead, there is a breath of tranquillity. Once the Three Gorges project is completed in 2009, Baidicheng will become an islet in the river.

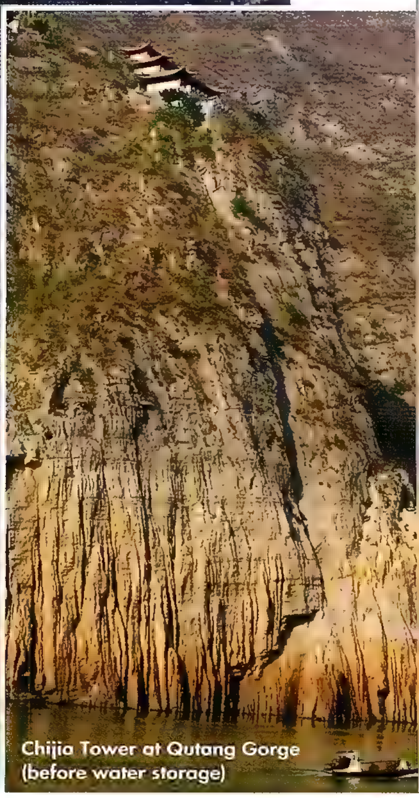
According to the cartographers of the water conservancy project, the car park at the foot of Baidi Hill is 150 m above water level and the gate of the Baidi Temple on the mountain is 284 m above water level. At present, the height from the car park to the mountaintop is 98 m and it will reduce to 78 m after the completion of the project.

Baidicheng (before water storage)

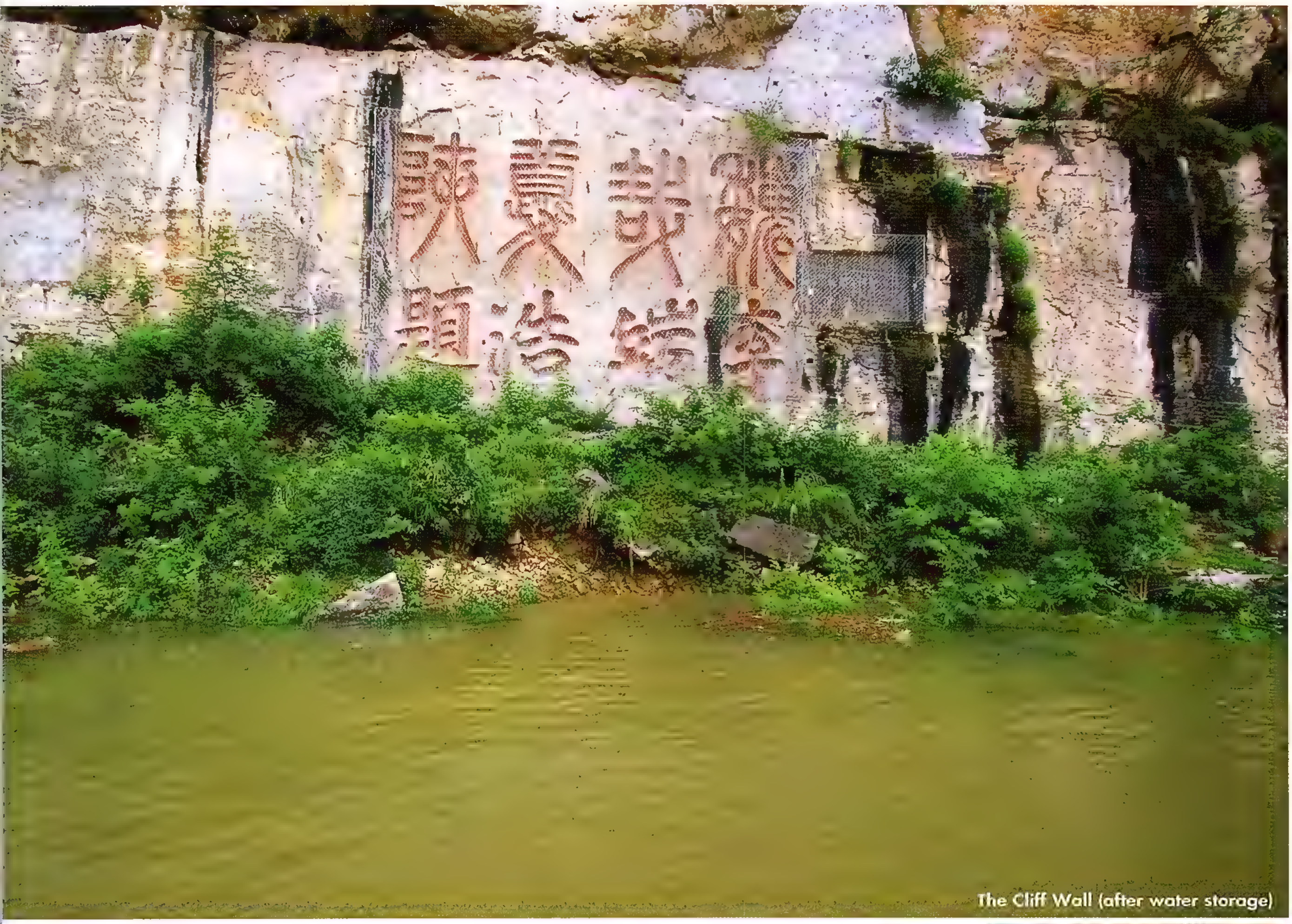
Chijia Tower and the Cliff Wall Inscriptions



Chijia Tower at Qutang Gorge
(after water storage)



Chijia Tower at Qutang Gorge
(before water storage)



The Cliff Wall (after water storage)

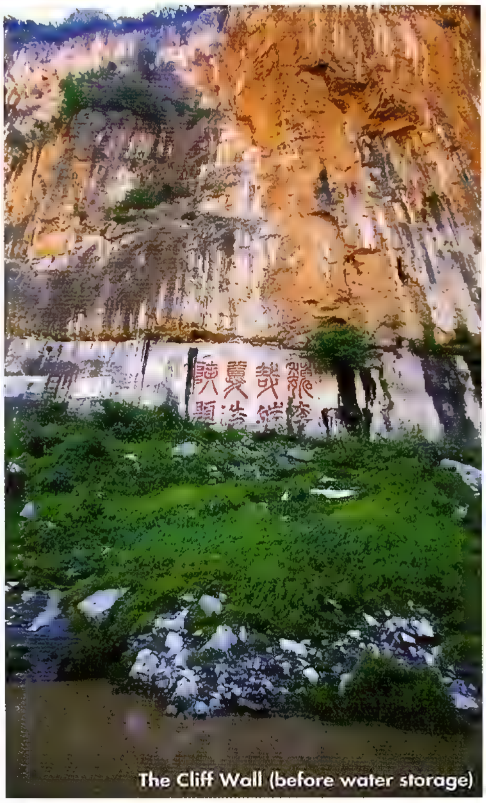
Chijia Tower is located at the foot of Chijia Mountain on the northern shore of Qutang Gorge. Looking down from the tower, travellers can have a grand view of the lofty Kuimen Gate and the river flowing east. Chijia Tower was the intersection of the ancient plank road and a path leading to mountain villages.

I said to the guards on the tower, "you have been keeping watch over China's most magnificent gate."

At Kuimen Gate, I found the inscription of General Feng Yuxiang, which reads, "Stride out Kuimen and Wushan to repulse the Japanese intruders." It reminded me of the time when the Chinese people rose to fight against the Japanese intruders and safeguarded their motherland.

In view of the fact that all the cliff inscriptions at Qutang Gorge will be under water after the second phase of the Three Gorges project, the state relics department has decided to move parts of the inscriptions to the cliff 175 m above the new water line, to a spot at the lower reaches about 300 m away. For the rest, special measures will be adopted to protect them in their original position.

The Cliff Wall is the cliff face covered in inscriptions on the Baiyan (White Salt) Mountain at Kuimen Gate on the southern bank of the Yangtze. In additon, there is a huge black rock with an area of over 1,000 m^2 that lies at the western side of the cliff by the river on the southern bank of the Qutang Gorge. In the space of several dozen square metres from top to bottom, there are 12 inscriptions made since the Song Dynasty (960-1279) to modern times.



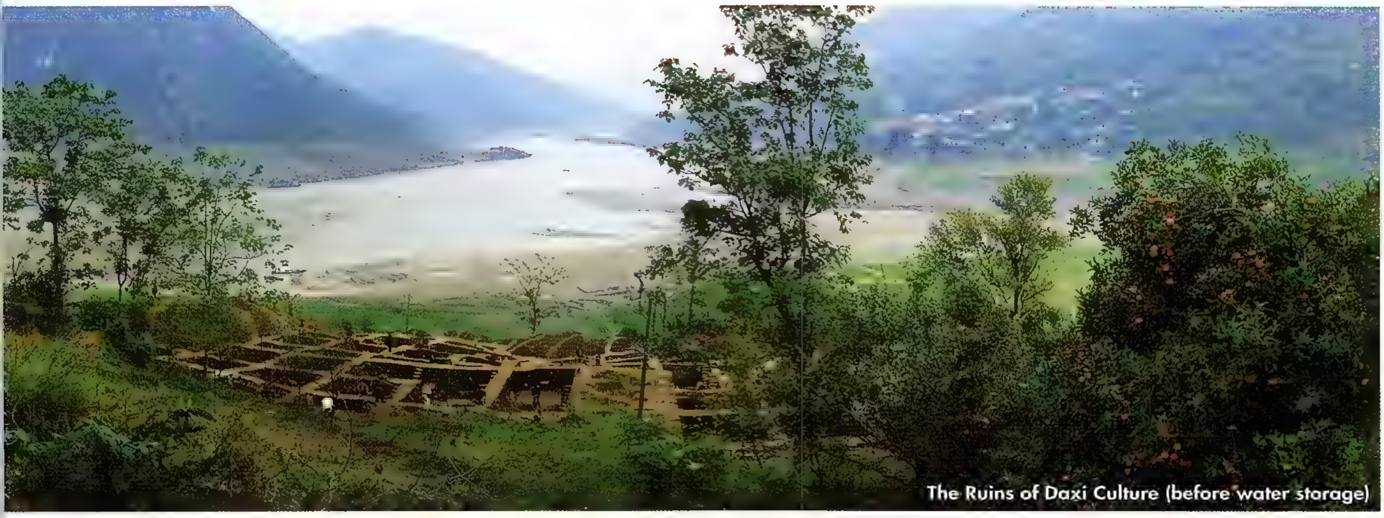
The Cliff Wall (before water storage)

The Ruins of Daxi Culture

Daxi Town stands on the southern shore of Qutang Gorge. It is also named Daixi, because a stream called Daixi flows into the town from the west. On a terrace of the mountain near the mouth of the stream lie the famous ruins of the Daxi Culture. In its early stages, it was a flourishing matrilineal commune, but it later became a patriarchal clan commune. Daxi culture and the Yangshao Culture left many important cultural ruins in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River on the Central Plains. Of different types yet both belonging to the Neolithic culture, they influenced each other in many ways.

Now the ruins of Daxi Culture have been entirely submerged and the town residents have long since moved to other places.

The Ruins of Daxi Culture (after water storage)

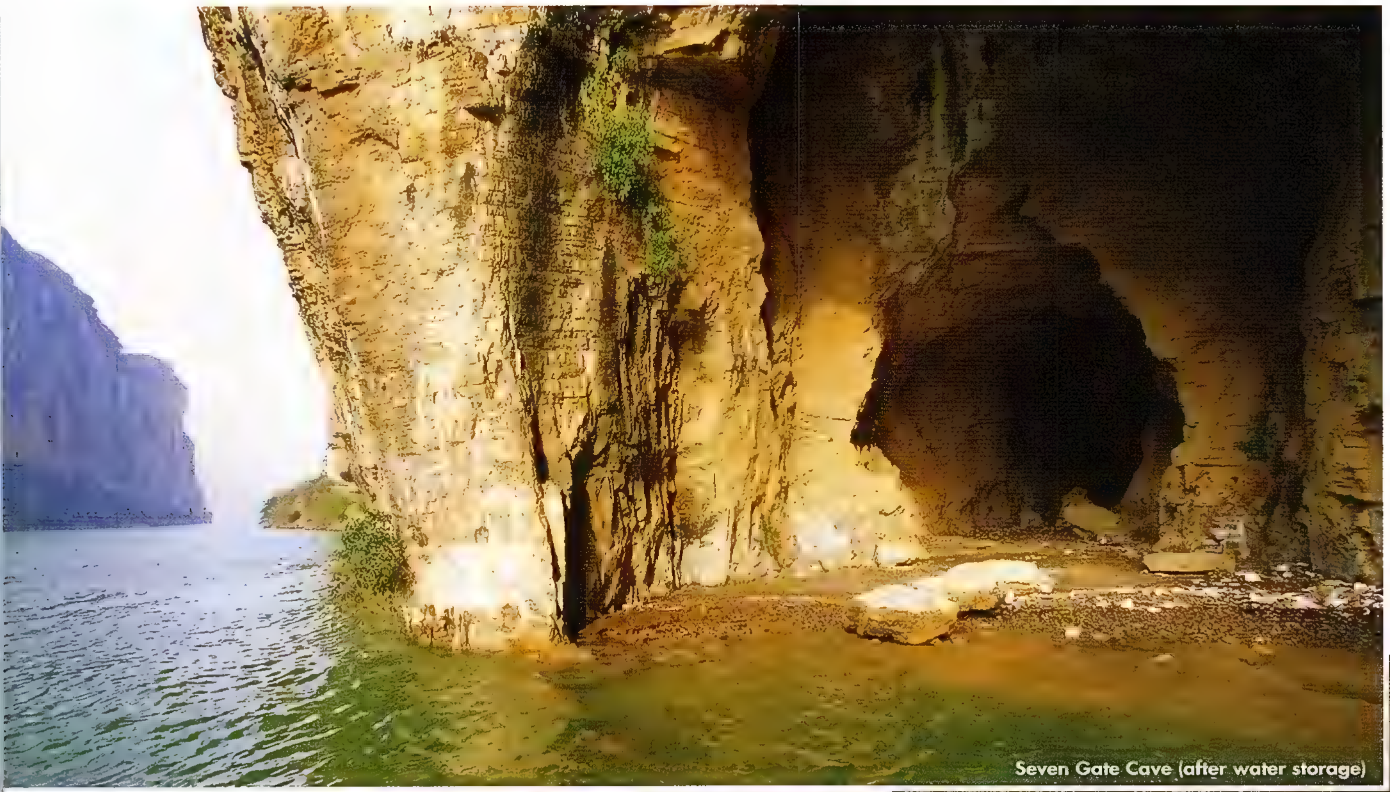


The Ruins of Daxi Culture (before water storage)

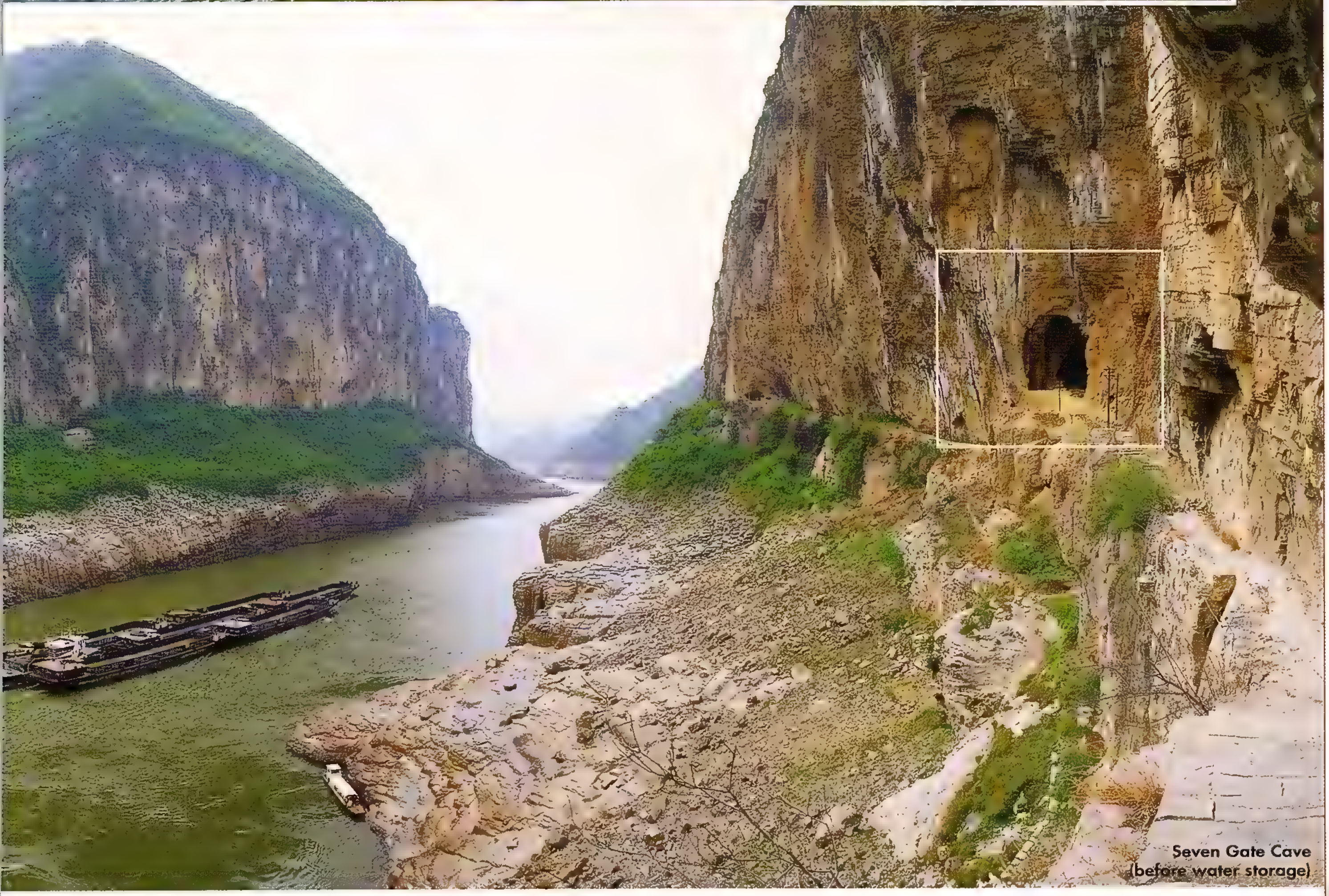
Seven Gate Cave and Intermittent Spring

There is a large cave located above the plank road on the precipice at the northern shore of the Qutang Gorge. Within the cave there are seven entrances, hence its name, Seven Gate Cave (Qidaomen). A lucid spring of underground water at the foot of the cliff tinkles out from time to time, and it is an intermittent spring (Jianxiequan). A famous poet once thought that the spring spurted when he shouted. Of course, we know this is because it is an intermittent spring, having nothing to do with shouting. There are several more caves at Qutang Gorge. During the War of Resistance Against Japan, the caves were used to install cannons, and the fortifications can still be seen today.

After the rise in the river level, now we can go straight to the entrance of the cave on boat.

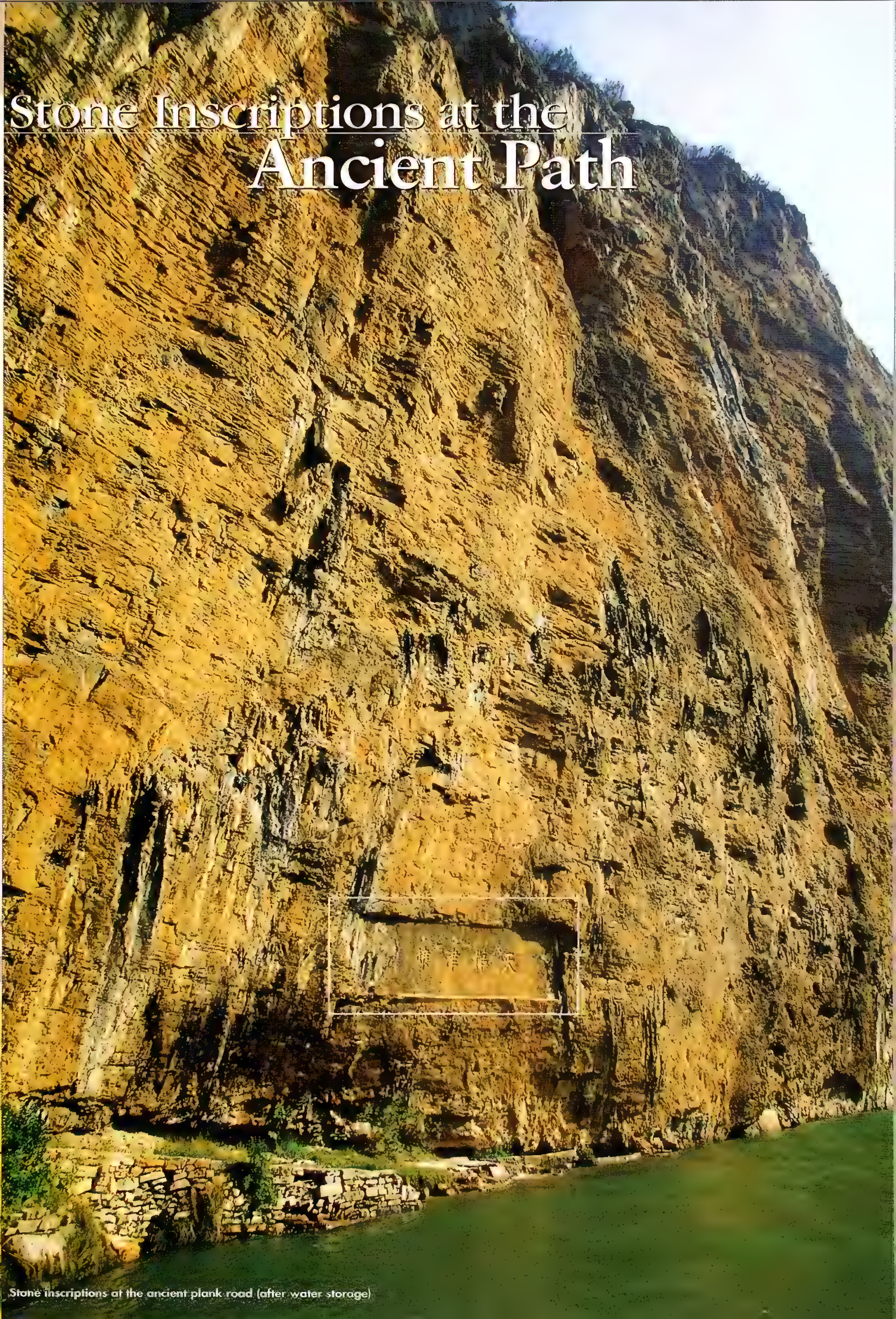


Seven Gate Cave (after water storage)

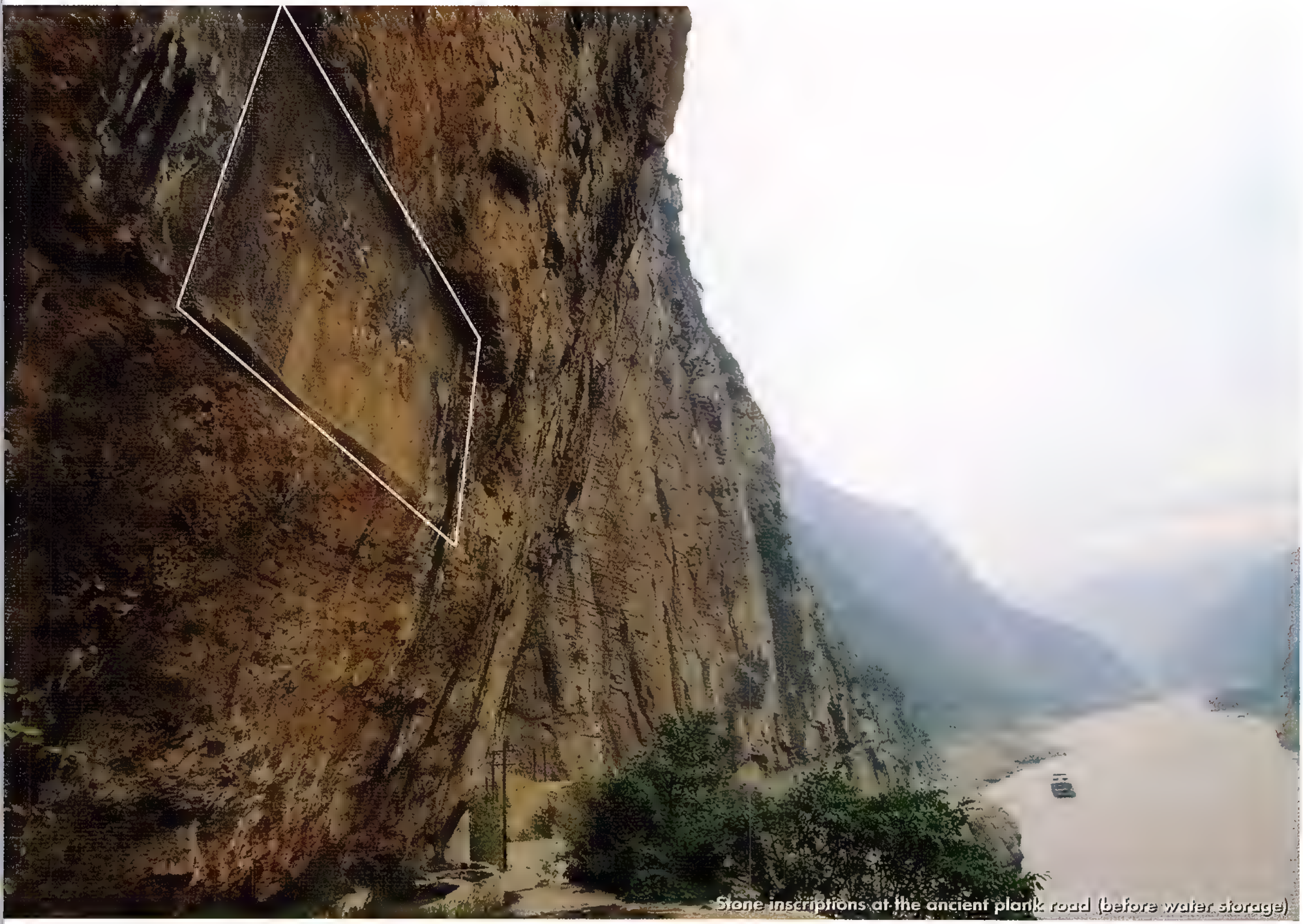


Seven Gate Cave
(before water storage)

Stone Inscriptions at the Ancient Path



Stone inscriptions at the ancient plank road (after water storage)

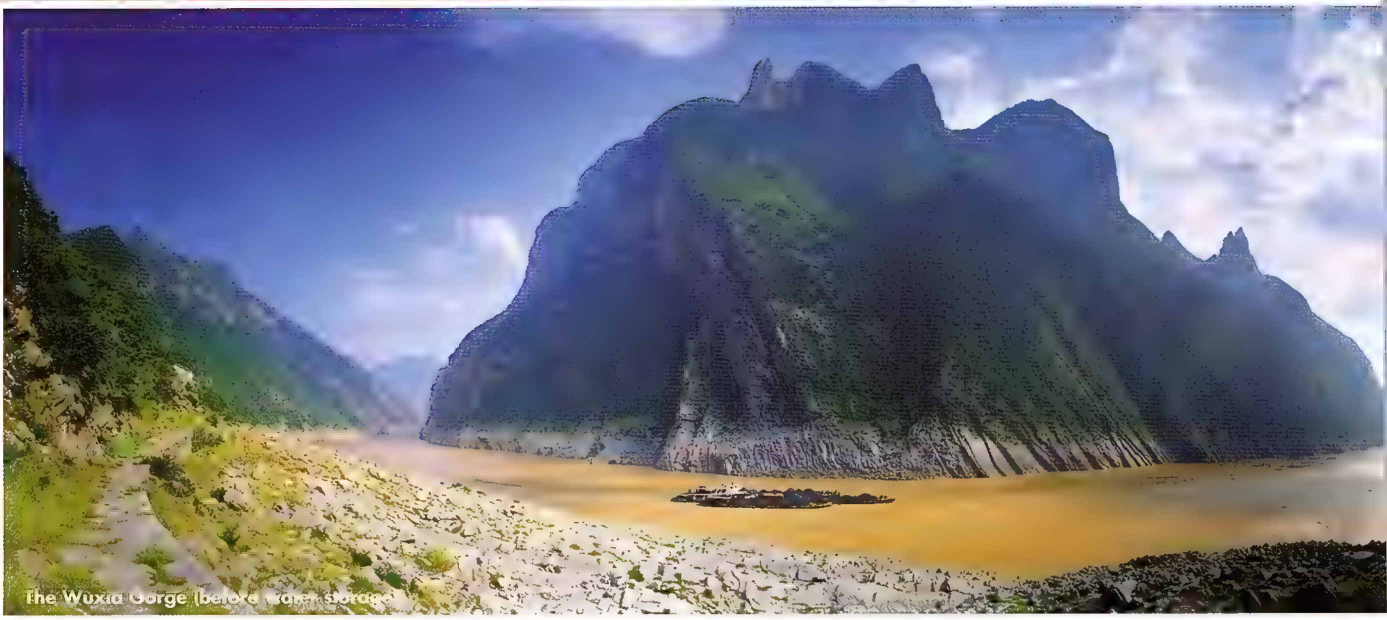


Stone inscriptions at the ancient plank road (before water storage)

On the precipitate cliff at Fengxiang Gorge, you can see the three big characters "Tian Ti Jin" in vigorous strokes, inscribed during the creation of the ancient plank road on the cliff in 1875 during the Qing Dynasty. The ancient plank road has been submerged, but the inscriptions eulogising the plank road builders remain above the river surface. They remind us of the great contributions of the ancient path breakers.

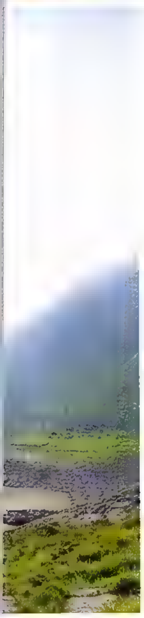
Kuimen Gate on Baidi Mountain is much lower than it was before. The bridge spanning the Caotang River has disappeared while the Kuimen Ancient Images Hall still stands by the river. The embankment around White Emperor City (Baidicheng) is now under construction.

The Wuxia Gorge



The Wuxia Gorge (before water storage)

The Wuxia Gorge (after water storage)

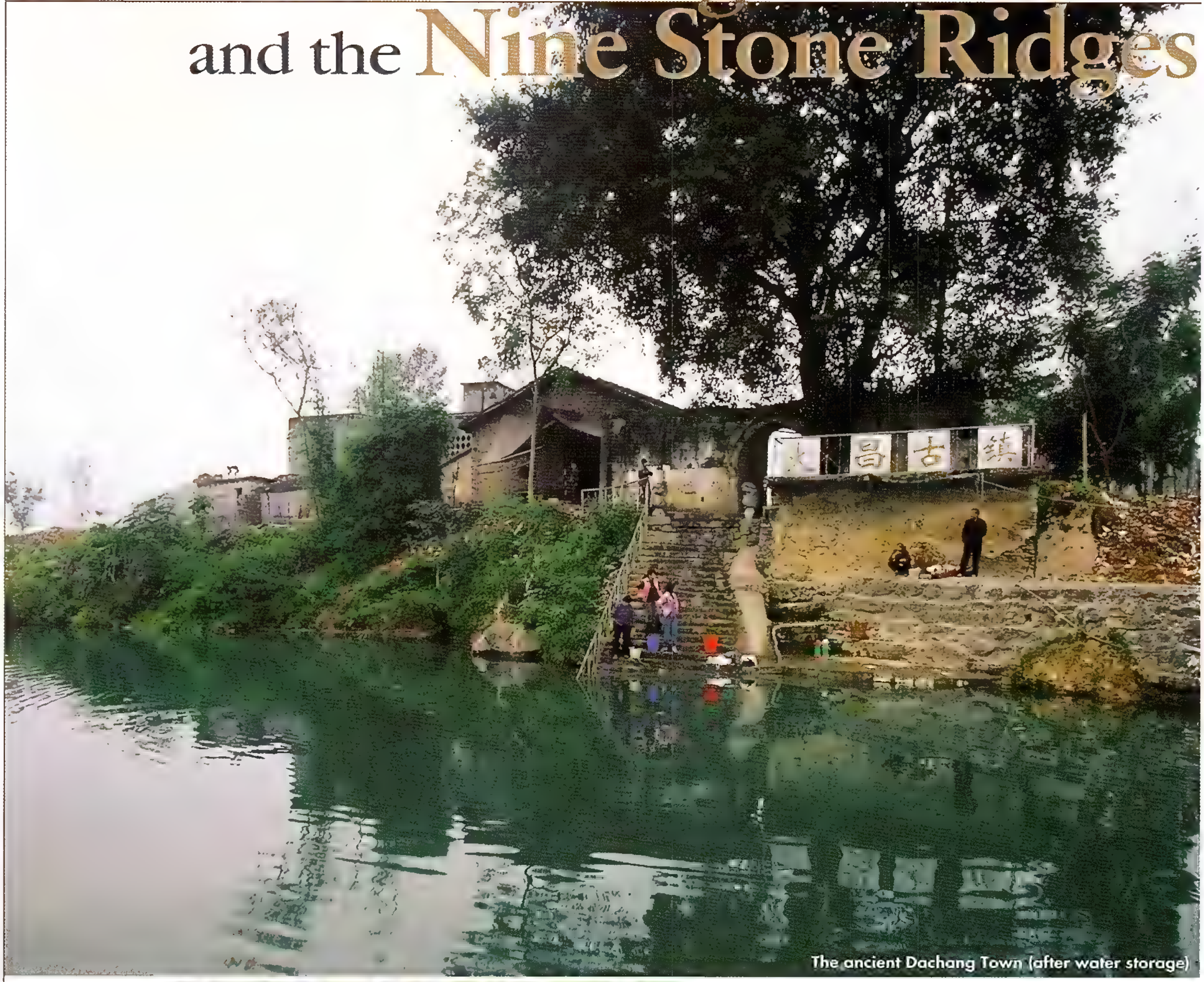


Skirting the shores of the Yangtze Three Gorges, there are many small towns named after rocks, like Heishi (Black Rock), and Qingshi (Green Rock). The most charming one is Qingshi Town facing Shennu (Goddess) Peak across the river. It is located at the foot of Cuiping (Green Screen) Mountain on the southern bank of the Yangtze with the beautiful Goddess Stream flowing past its western end before emptying into the Yangtze. Just like its name, there are many huge green rocks on the riverbanks below the small town.

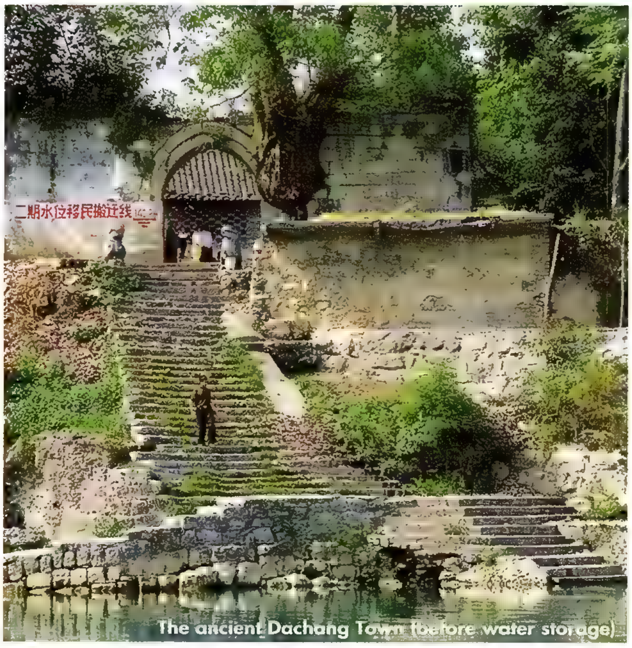
In recent years, the small town has become well known because of the beautiful Goddess. Everyone preparing to climb Goddess Mountain comes to stay at the town. Left on the stone steps in the town are innumerable footprints of Goddess admirers from all parts of the world. Consequently, Jixian Hotel, Shennu Guesthouse and the like have emerged one after another in the town.

Having experienced many vicissitudes of life for thousands of years, the town people have been living an ordinary life in a place that resembles a fairyland. In 2003, after the water level rose to 135 m, the Goddess remained safe and sound, but the small town has forever been laid in the depths of the river. Those who are unwilling to bid farewell to the Goddess have settled down at their new homes on the mountain, while many other households said goodbye to the Goddess and moved to another place.

Ancient Dachang Town
and the Nine Stone Ridges



The ancient Dachang Town (after water storage)

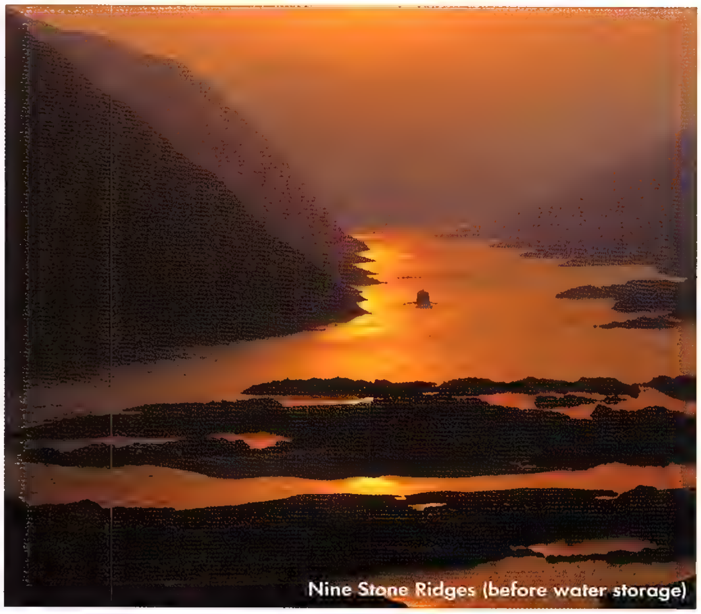


The ancient Dachang Town (before water storage)

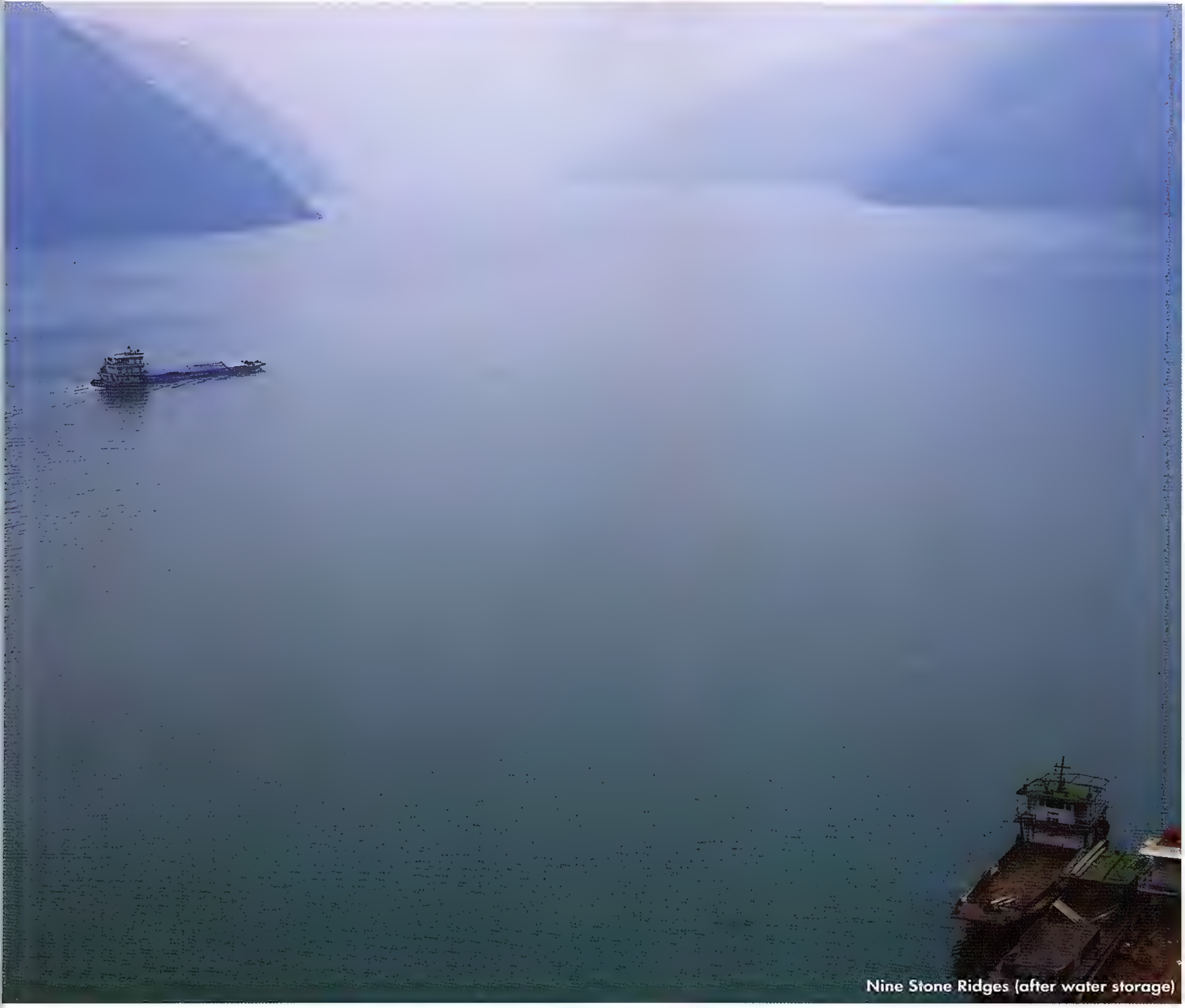
Dachang Town, situated on the eastern bank of Daning River 60 km from the township of Wushan, is the largest town on the Daning River. With a history of over 1,700 years, the town will be moved to Dengjialing, three kilometres from the present site, to escape inundation after the completion of the water storage project. In order to preserve the ancient town's original layout, the east, south and west gates, the Wen Family compound, and the T-shaped road junction — the five essential constructions — have been used to orientate the remodelled town. They classified and numbered the 35 ancient buildings, took photos and made videos of the whole process of removal to accurately restore the original style and features of the buildings.

Below the city of Zigui in Hubei Province, there are nine large stone ridges looming from the middle of the river. Hence the name "Jiulong Benjiang" — nine stone ridges stretch like dragons into the river.

The location of Nine Stone Ridges is Zhatan Shoal, one of the rapids in the Yangtze Three Gorges. In the past, many boats have sunk in this place. According to historical records, up to six boats sank in just one day during flood seasons. Since 1949, much work has done to harness the river, and finally, after the completion of the Gezhou Dam, there is no long any danger at Zhatan Shoal.



Nine Stone Ridges (before water storage)



Nine Stone Ridges (after water storage)

Xiangxi Stream

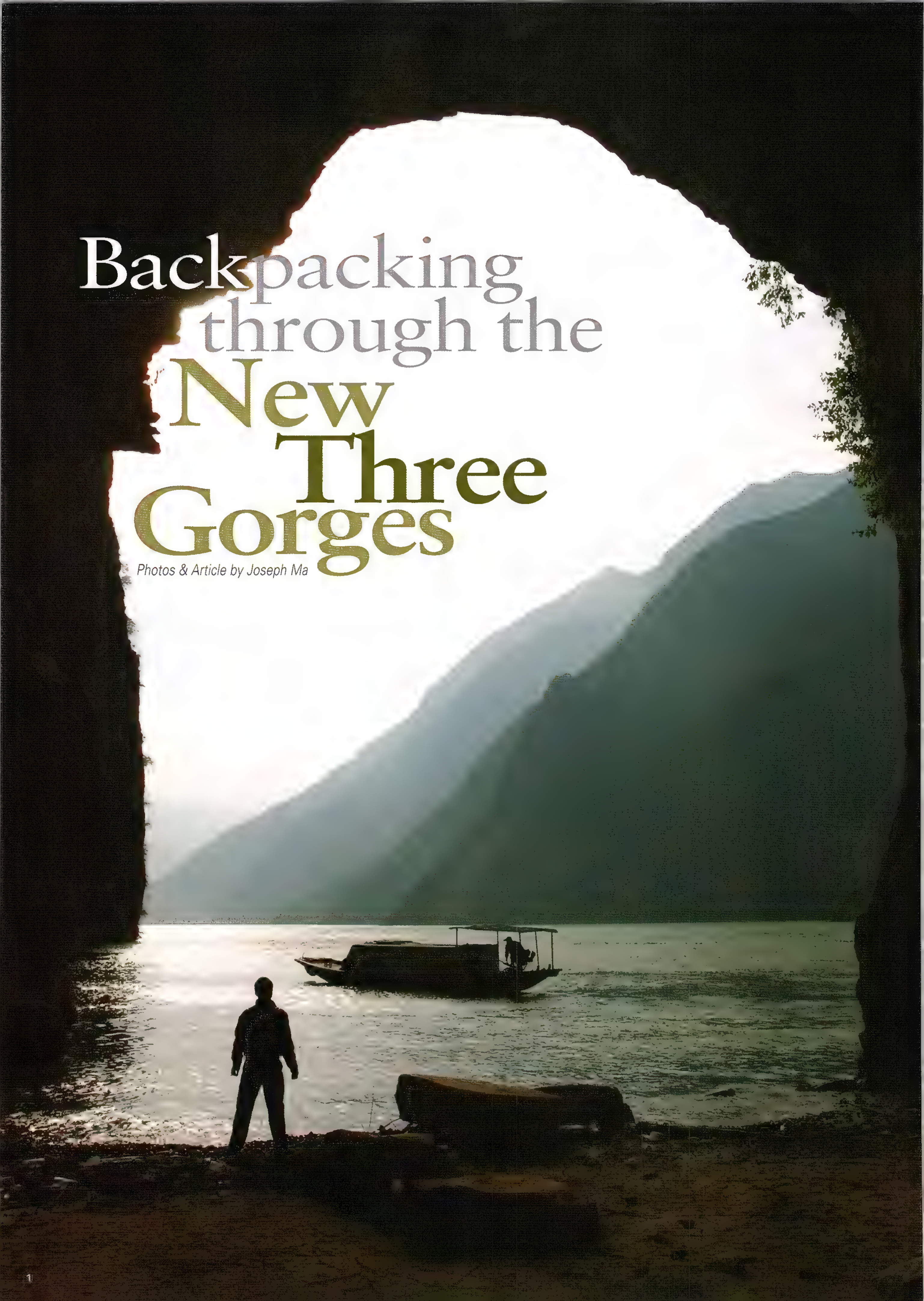
Located at the west mouth of the Xiling Gorge, Xiangxi Town earns its name from the Xiangxi (Fragrant) Stream flowing at its eastern end before pouring into the Yangtze. Originating from Shennongjia, the stream flows past Xingshan and Zigui counties. When mentioning Xiangxi, it is natural to think of Qu Yuan, an ancient giant of literature, and the imperial concubine Wang Zhaojun who married a foreign king to make peace with the Hun (an ancient Chinese minority nationality) during the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-24).

Legend has it that the fragrance of the stream comes from Zhaojun, as she lived by the water and often washed her hands in the stream. Once she washed her handkerchief in the stream, her necklace accidentally came loose and the pearls scattered into the stream. Henceforth the stream became fragrant.

After the water storage, I failed to find my favourite shooting spot on the southern bank of the Yangtze, because Xiangxi Town on the opposite side has already been inundated by the river water.

Xiangxi Stream (after water storage)

Xiangxi Stream (before water storage)



Backpacking through the New Three Gorges

Photos & Article by Joseph Ma

Having voyaged to the Three Gorges several times, I considered myself a veteran traveller there. Had I not revisited after the water conservancy project, I would not have realised that the Gorges were no longer what they were. Mountains remain the same; yet, the torrential Yangtze River has turned into a colossal lake. The perpetual Three Gorges has donned a new facade in the new century.

I travelled with Zheng Yunfeng, a photographer who has been recording the transformation of the Gorges over the past seven years. We started from Chongqing, amidst the deep autumn of November.

A Test of Perseverance

Chongqing is the major port on the upper course of Yangtze, where most sightseeing cruises depart. The pier Chaotianmen was a buoyant bridge chained by simple tugboats extending to the middle of the river to collect passengers. The ticket office is next to Chaotianmen Hotel. Outside the hotel, you will run into people trying to sell tickets which they claim are much cheaper than those from the box office.

Our first stop was Fuling, known for its preserved mustard. In the past, the boats would stop in Fuling or Wan County for a couple of hours, to let visitors go ashore for sightseeing. Then they would enter the Gorges the next day devouring the sublime scenery of the Three Gorges and Shennong River in one day. Now, we took the fastest means of transportation available — the jetfoil. The 120-km trip just took a bit more than an hour.

Once off the jetfoil, we were taken by surprise. All we saw was a staircase climbing from the shore all the way up to the top of the dams. There were a few hundred stairs. It definitely was a challenge of fitness and perseverance. In the near future, the water level of the Gorges is predicted to rise another 40 m. Therefore, the new town was built high up. Visitors have to climb about 100 steps to get to the town centre. Porters, upon seeing visitors alighting from the boats, all flocked to carry the luggage — a common phenomenon on any pier. With the price negotiated, we let the porters take our stuff to the town. The top of the dam was just a big earthen bank, like a construction site. We still had to traverse a terrible path to get to the new town of Fuling. Meanwhile, the porter claimed that he had only agreed to take our luggage to the top of the dam. He asked us to pay extra if we wanted him to take the stuff to

1. The Qidaomen Cave is used to be in cliff but now the boat can go to it directly.
2. Going to the cities around the Three Gorges area needs to climb scaling-ladders and walk on the messy roads; it is better to hire the porters to carry the baggage.
3. Dwellers of Fuling, a mountain city, often have baskets carried on their backs, which they can put their children in.
4. Passenger ships to the Three Gorges start from Chaotianmen Pier, Chongqing.

the town. Otherwise, he would take our things back to the pier. Zheng was angered by his dishonesty and lamented that people were not how they used to be.

Gambling Encouraged by the Government

After snaking across some old streets, we came to the new town. The streets were wide, full of cars and people. We went to the square in the town centre, decorated with colourful banners and flooded with people. The government was selling some lottery tickets to win new cars. The host tried to urge people to take out their savings for the tickets. There were over a hundred staffs selling tickets. Although the government used the idea of charity to attract people, one still pondered how ethical it was for a government to promote gambling.

Apart from the preserved mustard, Fuling was famous for its historic relics at Baiheliang. Sadly, due to the rising water, Baiheliang was already forever buried in the river. The authority is now planning an underwater museum, in hopes of giving visitors a chance to see this 1000-year-old relic. Before this museum gets underway, Fuling may find it hard to keep visitors interested. We spent two hours there and took the next boat to the Ghost Town, Fengdu. The 50-km trip took less than an hour. Fengdu had been affected by the dam project and forced to relocate. Now the old town centre was more or less pulled down, replaced by a new town on the southern shore. Most passenger boats berthed there. Again we had to climb hundreds of steps to get to the new town. After the experience of Fuling, we accepted the challenge gladly. In the town, we asked around and decided to try Huangdu Hotel, situated on the main street. It's a three-star hotel with a good price: a twin-room cost only about 150 yuan a night. The service was surprisingly good.

The new town of Fengdu had been established for just a few years. The roads in the town centre were wide and buildings on both sides of the roads were neat and tidy. Like most new towns, Fengdu lacked character, let alone the unique ancient town flavour.

A Luxurious Hotel in Town

The famous Ghost Town is situated on the northern shore of Yangtze. Since we did not have time to go there for a visit, we decided to spend the night visiting the new town before dark. We went westwards along the main road for about 20 minutes and came to a startling building. The ground floor was covered with eye-catching western statues and pillars. It was the four-star hotel Hongsheng VIP House. The foyer of the hotel was elegant, covered with marble. This new hotel offered a

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1. Fuling, home of pickled mustard tuber
2. The pickled mustard tubers are made from fresh tubers mixed with seasoning.
3. It is difficult to imagine that Fengdu, a small city, has such a luxurious hotel.
4. The city government sells lottery tickets in downtown Fuling.
5. The city is full of colourful banners and advertisements.

special discount: a standard twin room for 160-180 yuan. The 1000-ft^2 deluxe suite, with a big TV screen, hi-fi stereo, and a private Jacuzzi, cost less than 1000 yuan. I could not imagine a small town would have such a lavish hotel. That evening we had a buffet dinner that cost us only 38 yuan per person. Though the food was not extravagant, the atmosphere was graceful and the service superb.

The next day, we rented a cab to take us to the famous mountain. Since the bridge was on the eastern side, and there was a toll, the driver asked us for 60 yuan. After driving for more than half an hour, we arrived at the Ghost Town, called Damenkou. It used to be a bustling county centre but is now totally torn down. In a chilly wind and light drizzle, the place was especially deserted and weathered. Yet, when the water rises up to 175 m in a couple of years, this town will be drowned forever. We left our luggage at the front gate and hiked up the hill. The cable cars in service were used by a handful of visitors. Fengdu lured its visitors with the Ghost Town. All the scenic spots on the hill were linked to some folklore of the underworld: Bridge of Despair, Road to Perdition, Palace of Hell, Nostalgia Terrace, etc. To be frank, all of them were very sloppily made, and not really worth visiting. Nonetheless, since it's the only "hell" offered in the whole nation, many tourists are glad to pay a visit.

A New Trend of Backpacking

We returned to the world from "hell" after the two-hour tour. Having picked up our luggage, we hired a tricycle to

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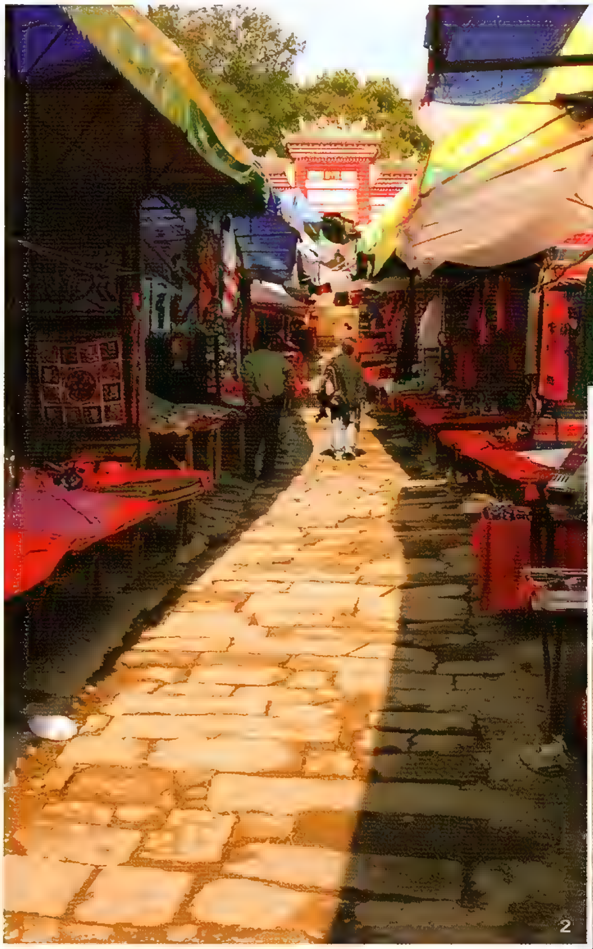
get to the pier, where we planned to take a boat to Shibaozhai in Zhong County. The so-called pier in front of us was sordid. There was no schedule or notice of any kind. All we could do was ask around, but ended up collecting a bunch of different replies. The most trustworthy response (seemingly) came from a guy who sold tickets. He said that there would be a boat going upstream (to Chongqing) that day, and the one downstream (to Yichang) had gone already. The other option was driving to the new town and getting on board there — which seemed too much of a hassle. Zheng found a little "miandi" (bread cab) to take us to Zhong County, 50 yuan for 70 km, not a bad deal. Had we known it earlier, we would have looked for a cab right after getting down from the hill.



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Before the Gorges Project is finished, the adjacent areas of the dam are still undergoing relocation and transplanting. Most infrastructure is not yet accomplished, especially highways, piers, and new towns. When backpacking the Gorges, you have to be prepared. It took the bread cab an hour to get to Sanxiafeng Hotel in Zhong County. A standard twin room usually costs 400 yuan a night, and in the off-season it costs half. The price for three-star hotels in the Gorges region ranges from 150 to 200 yuan. Zhongzhuo Town is a hilly town. The best-known scenic region there is Shibaozhai, about an hour from Zhongzhuo Town. A cab-ride costs 80 yuan, the bus, eight yuan. The best option is the ferry but the schedule is highly unpredictable. So we stayed with hired cars.

The Disappearance of Ancient Streets

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The Zhongxian Bus Station is very dirty and messy. We looked around and found the bus to Shibaozhai Town and bought the tickets after getting on the bus. We walked along a narrow path and soon we saw the town, located at the foot of Yuyin Mountains. I was here 10 years ago, and the general appearance of the town is almost the same but the buildings along an ancient street dating from the Ming and Qing dynasties had already torn down. My heart ached to see the destruction of such a nice old town. In order to build the dam, many towns of classical beauty like Shibaozhai have disappeared. Climbing to the top of the town we saw the water of the Yangtze River flow from west to east with an incomparable grandeur.

We were back in Zhongxian County at five in the afternoon. Then we left for Wanzhou by bus, after having missed the last boat.

A Cloud of Dust Filled Wanzhou

When the bus finally arrived at Wanzhou we promptly took a taxi to the Qianxi Hotel, a three-star hotel. The discounted price was 238 to 288 yuan for a standard room in the hotel. After settling in we went out to look for restaurants along Taibai Street. The air was foul and the street was covered with sand. The passing buses and cars sent the dust rolling up which caused people on the street covering their noses. The next day we went to see the Bell Tower, a symbol of former Wanxian, halfway up the hill. We found that half the city had been torn down, looking like a ruin.

Our next destination was Yunyang, about 35 km from Wanzhou. We chartered a taxi for a price of 120 yuan. At first I thought it was a little expensive, but the driver told us that he had to pay a road toll, about 30 yuan, and he had to drive back without passengers. It took about one hour to Yunyang, which is famous for its Zhang Fei Temple. Zhang Fei was a general during the Three Kingdoms Period (220—280), and it was said that after he was murdered by his two subordinates, his head was thrown into the Yangtze River. When it reached Yunyang, the head circled on the water surface and did not go on floating down because the lower reaches of the river was the territory of his enemies. People in Yunyang then buried Zhang Fei's head in Yunyang and had a temple built there. Now the temple had been relocated to the south bank, to avoid being submerged by water.

It was 120 km from Yunyang to Wushan and we paid 97 yuan for the turbojet sea express. We passed Qutang Gorge, the first of the Three Gorges, signaling the beginning of our trip to the Three Gorges. It seemed that people on the boat were all in a rush and not interested in the scenery of Qutang Gorge. They were more interested in the TV soap opera showing in the cabin. Zheng Yunfeng was the only person taking pictures of the beautiful scenery on both

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1. It is a pity that Shibaozhai Town with a history of more than a 100 years has been demolished.
2. The old houses have been torn down in Shibaozhai Town but the flag road is still there.
3. Shibaozhai Town before it was torn down (by Zheng Yunfeng)
4. A building behind the statue of Emperor of Heaven on top of Mingshan Mountain in Fengdu.
5. The transplanted Temple (in memorial of the famous General Zhang Fei) has been rebuilt in the image of the old one.

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sides of the river.

We went directly to Wushan without stopping in Baidicheng in Fengjie because we could come back by boat. Wushan County is located right in the middle of the Qutang and Wuxia gorges, or near the conflux of the Daning River and the Yangtze River. Going forward along the Daning River, you can see the Small Three Gorges with picturesque scenery. Many of Zheng Yunfeng's fine pictures were taken in this area.

The Lesser Three Gorges

Following the rise in water, many houses had been torn down in Wushan County seat and the area looked like a big mess. As soon as we got off the boat, porters, taxi drivers and hotel people rushed up to drum up trade. The price of the taxi was 10 yuan, which doubled the price in other places, and it took only 10 minutes to the Wushan Hotel in Guangdong Zhong Road. This three-star hotel gave us a half price rate of 190 yuan since it was the slack season. Guangdong Zhong Road is the main street, wide and clean and with shops, coffee bars and foot therapy clinics on both sides of the street.

The next day Zheng Yunfeng found a boatman and we rented a boat. It was more flexible than taking regular tourist boats, and we only paid 100 yuan for one day. The boatman told us that business was not good so he did not ask for more. The real reason was that Zheng Yunfeng was his old customer, but in the busy season we would have to pay more, at least 200 yuan. The next morning we went on our trip to the lesser Three Gorges. The boat, seven or eight metres long, used to transport both goods and passengers, with a cabin in the middle.

The Lesser Three Gorges are not small at all, but the scenery is really fascinating. About an hour later we were in Shuanglong Town after passing Bawu Gorge. Half of the town had been submerged and the streets were under the water. A woman was selling pancakes on the

1. **Ancient Dachang Town now still looks the same as the old days. It will be submerged in a few years.**
2. **A well-known collector, Lu Chengming, exhibits his collections of antiques from the Three Gorges area. This rare curved shoulder pole is one of them.**
3. **A peddler is selling pork in the ancient Dachang City.**
4. **The new Wushan City square attracts a lot of businesses.**

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riverside, for fifty cents each. We had six people on the boat so we bought more than a dozen pancakes. The woman told us that it was not bad if she could earn 10 yuan or more a day.

Going on we entered Dicui Gorge. It is more interesting when the river becomes narrower and the valley becomes deeper in the Lesser Three Gorges. From the Madu River, a branch of the Daning River, are the Small Three Gorges and motorboats are not allowed to enter. In summer, wooden boats can row in though. Sightseeing boats usually berth at the sand beach and tourists can get off to take some pictures.

Dachang — An Ancient Town in the Deep Mountains

Coming out of Dicui Gorge, we were in Dachang, an ancient town hiding in the deep mountains. On both sides of the flagstone streets were several-hundred-year old wooden houses. It came as a big comfort to us that the old houses in Dachang still remained. But the water level had also risen, and compared with pictures of the dock taken some time ago, we could see that half the stairs were under water already. So Dachang will be another Shibao Town in the near future, sunk under water.

The Wen clan used to be the largest in Dachang, and now people can still see the family residence. The old courtyard was rented by an old man, Lu Chengming, who exhibited his collections of unusual stones and old tools collected over several dozen years in the area. Lu Chengming, a person with high aspirations and determination, could not afford the 10,000 yuan rent each year on his meager income. Lu lamented that he would have no money and would take the items on display back home.

4

Climbing Up Goddess Peak

We said goodbye to Dachang and could not imagine what it would be like on the next visit. Zheng Yunfeng told me that there were Twelve Peaks in Wushan and he had climbed up all of them. The pictures he liked most were all taken on the peaks. Sometimes he climbed up the mountains on rainy days and waited for the river to be enveloped in mist and clouds when the weather cleared. I had visited the Three Gorges three times but had never climbed up the mountains. So I decided to climb Goddess Peak, the most fascinating of the twelve peaks.

We took the boat to Wuxia Gorge passing Luyou Cave. It took less than one hour to get to Qingshi Village at the foot of Goddess Peak. Half of the village, with a small population, had been submerged, so residents living close to the river had to move halfway up the hill. Two former assistants of Zheng Yunfeng were natives of this village, and it was Zheng Yunfeng who had helped them to find jobs in other places. Looking up at Goddess Peak and the great river, we felt relaxed and easy. I would have liked to stay there for good. But I told the young people in the village that they should find a new path in life, otherwise they would live on fishing and farming for the rest of their life like their predecessors.

Climbing Goddess Peak

Led by a guide, my assistant and I started our trip to Goddess Peak. Zheng Yunfeng did not go with us because

he had a bad cold. First we crossed the river to the north bank and then started to climb. The guide told us that we were taking a shortcut taken by the local people. It took less than two hours to the summit while the former route would have taken more than three hours. The guide, about 30 years old, was from Qingshi Village and like all the local people, including the boatmen and porters, wore Western-style clothes. He wore leather shoes with rubber overshoes, and carried a sickle. He did not have proper hiking gear but he climbed as if he was on the flat. My assistant and I, who were carrying the cameras, fell down several times. Finally we reached the top of the Peak after more than an hour's climb. I had only looked at the peak from a distance before, and now the Goddess was before my eyes, giving me an extraordinary feeling. The Statue of the Goddess, just a cold rock, had given play to people's imagination for thousands of years. It had rained the previous day and cleared up while we were there. Finally I saw the beautiful scene overlooking the river, enveloped by mist and clouds. It reminded me of the poem, "The Mountain Spirit" written by the great poet Qu Yuan: "Alone I stand on the mountain top while the clouds gather beneath me. All gloomy and dark is the day, yet when the east wind drifts, and God sends down rain." I thought the scene described by him might be the same as I had seen. The beautiful mountains and water gave birth to the great poets, such as Qu Yuan, and their imaginative poems.

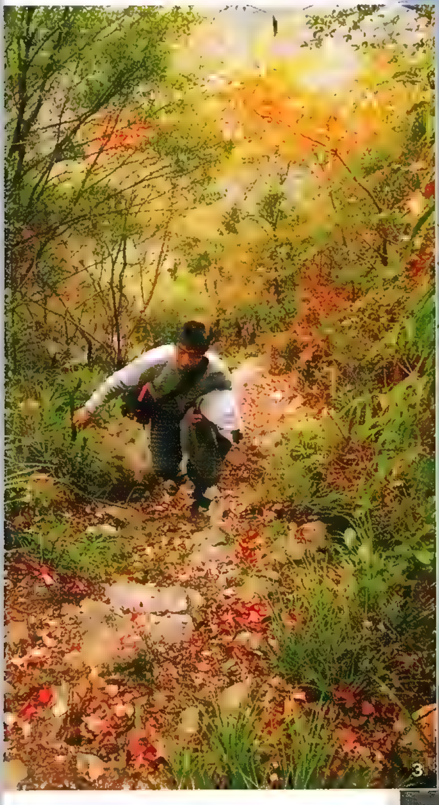
Visiting Shennong Gorge by Pea-shaped Boat

Travelling to the east by turbojet express from Wushan, it took about an hour to get to Badong, Hubei Province, after passing Wuxia Gorge. The Twelve Peaks of Wushan had disappeared in the vast veil of mist behind us. Getting off the boat I shrank back at the sight of the ladder that we had to climb up. I really did not know why the cable cars on the docks never worked. Even Zheng Yunfeng's two strong young assistants who carried the cameras and other equipment were wet through with sweat and breathing hard when we finally arrived. I wondered how senior citizens could manage climbing up.

The only reason to visit Badong was to see the Shennong River. Originating from Shennongjia, the stream, with a length of 60 km, empties into the Yangtze River in Badong. It flows through sparsely populated and

1. The ladder at Badong Wharf offers a good test for tourists.
2. The Wushan Mountains are dimly discernible in the mist
3. The way to the top of Goddess Peak.
4. Overlooking the Yangtze River from Goddess Peak.

picturesque remote mountains and forests, with clear blue water. I visited Shennong River 10 years ago. At that time, we first took the bus to Yeziba and then took a pea-shaped wooden boat, drifting to the mouth of the Yangtze River. Since the dam had begun to store water, the level in Shennong River had risen several dozen metres. So



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now travellers do not have to take the bus to Yeziba, but can take a tourist boat and then a small wooden boat at Yeziba to Shennong Gorge. The tourist boats are more comfortable and tranquil but lack the character of the pea-shaped wooden boats.

Another famous scenic spot in Badong is the Qiufeng (Autumn Wind) Pavilion in the old Badong City, built to commemorate Kou Zhun, a prime minister of the Song Dynasty (960-1279). So we took a taxi to the old city and saw that the road was covered with dust and the traffic was in chaos. This is common now in the cities and towns around the reservoir area of the Three Gorges. The old city was in great disorder and houses were falling down, which made the Qiufeng Pavilion seem more desolate. The two-story pavilion was rebuilt in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) on the location of an earlier pavilion built by Kou Zhun. With the mountains behind, the pavilion faces the great river. By 2007, the water will rise up to 175 m and perhaps the pavilion will move further up the mountains by then.

From Badong we went to Maoping, the new city of Zigui, home town of Qu Yuan. Zigui used to be the closest county to the Three Gorges, so its old county seat had been completely submerged first. The old Zigui has moved to Maoping, which is several dozen kilometres east of the original town.

It only takes one hour to go from Badong to Maoping by the turbojet express. When Zheng Yunfeng saw half of the old Zigui City on the north bank under water, he had a sad expression in his eyes, like he was saying goodbye to an old friend. We passed the dangerous Xiling Gorge where fatal accidents often happened because of the many dangerous shoals. In order to guarantee navigation, some of the dangerous shoals had been blasted out. The rising water had widened the river near the dam. The passengers all get off the boat in Maoping and then take a free bus to Yichang (the ticket includes both the boat and bus ride). It turned out that passing the ship lock takes up to several hours. Most local people do not want to spend half a day here, so they normally take a bus from Maoping.

Pinghu Road Can Be Seen in Many Cities

Zigui Harbour has an elegant passenger waiting room. This is the only harbour besides Chongqing that has a cable car shuttle between the harbour and the passenger room. The new Maoping City is unusually big with its wide streets, but it looks almost the same as the other new cities and has no character of its own. Almost all the new cities have a street named Pinghu Road, after a well-known phrase of ex-chairman Mao Zedong. You will also find a Jiefang (Liberation) Road, Renming (People's) Road and Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen) Road in many cities.

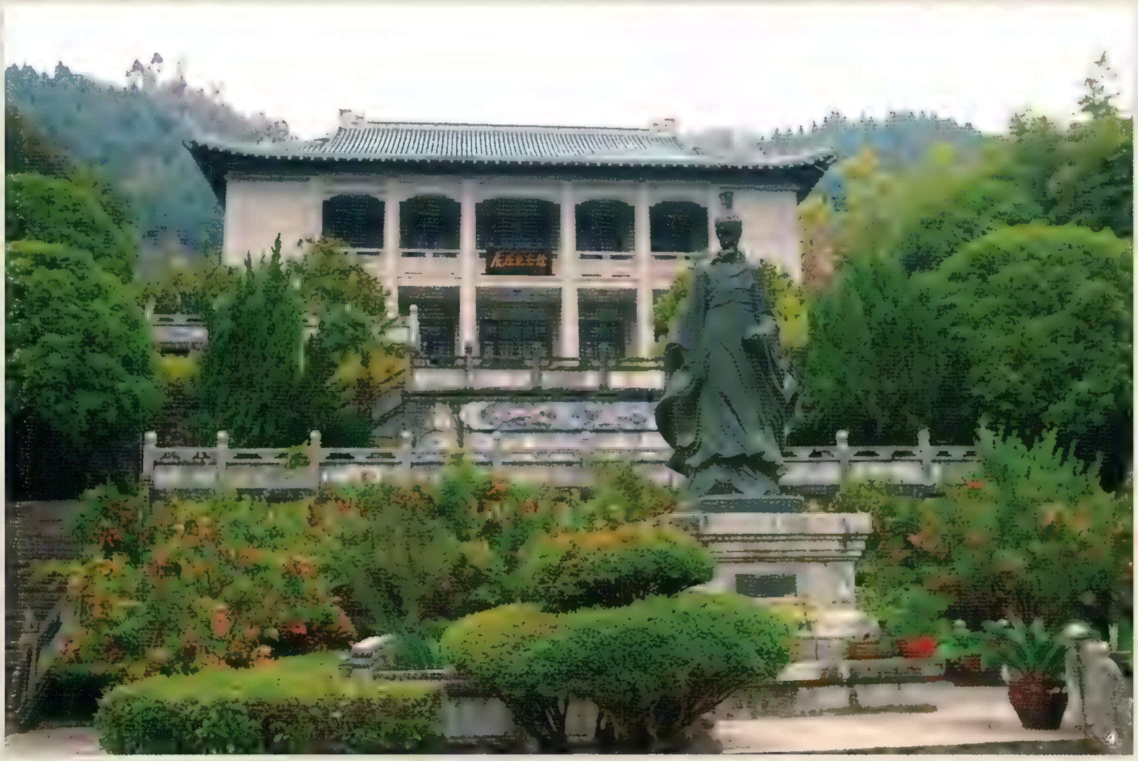
Our purpose in Maoping was to visit the Memorial Hall of Qu Yuan in the old Zigui City. We rented a car so that we could take in the spectacular sights of the Xiling Gorge and the scenery on the way. It took more than two hours to get to the dilapidated old Zigui City. We rushed to find the

memorial arch with the words "Birth Place of Qu Yuan" at the county seat, but could not find it. Then we went to ask some town people chatting on the beach. One of the old men pointed to the river. "The arch is already under the water and you can no longer see it." I was disappointed, and I could not help recalling visiting the memorial arch and wandering in the town 10 years ago. Revisiting the Three Gorges I was full of myriad emotions. I missed the places and scenic spots that I had visited before. I am not the kind of person who does not accept change, but I still think that some things are better left alone. I felt a little better when we saw the Memorial Hall of Qu Yuan was still the same as I had seen ten years ago, and the statue of Qu Yuan as well, with its familiar haggard appearance. More than 2000 years ago Qu Yuan wrote the poem "Orange Eulogy", and now orange and tangerine trees still grow here, adding life to the lonely memorial hall. In several years, the water will rise up so much that even Qu Yuan's Memorial Hall will have to move, along with his country and people.

The Three Gorges Power Station, the biggest in the world, has controlled the roaring water of Yangtze River and turned it into a mirror flat surface reflecting the dam.

Since the dam covers a large area, the local authority has worked out a route for tourists. Tourists can take a public bus from Yichang City to the dam travel centre, and then take a special tourist bus to visit Tanziling, the sluice area and some other scenic spots.

Arrival in Yichang meant the end of our trip to the Three Gorges. The weather in November in the Three Gorges is changeable, and we often encountered cold wind mixed with drizzle. Owing to our travel on the river by boat, Zheng Yunfeng and I caught one cold after another. I flew back to Shenzhen in poor health. Just before parting we agreed that it was better to come to the Three Gorges in spring and summer, not in November because the scenery then would be better, and the weather would be more agreeable.



1. Maoping, the new county seat of Zigui
2. Zigui teems with oranges and tangerines.
3. Zigui Harbour in Maoping
4. The Qu Yuan Memorial Hall was moved here many years ago and will be moved again when the water rises up.

Attractions in the New Three Gorges

Photos by Zheng Yunfeng   Article by Zheng Yunfeng, Zhang Ronghui

The Three Gorges Dam

The Three Gorges Dam is definitely the most attractive scenic spot in the new Three Gorges. The hydropower station is the largest in the world and has changed the Three Gorges forever. It is situated near Maoping, the new county seat of Zigui. The Dam Scenic Area has been developed for tourists with shuttle buses provided for convenience.

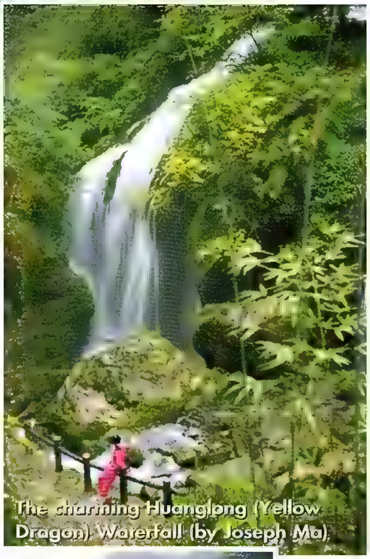
It is easy to reach the dam from Yichang, about 35 minutes by bus from Yemingzhu to Xiling Qiaotou. From there you can take a taxi from the dam area to drive one kilometre to the Lizhashou Tourist Service Centre. At the service centre, tickets are available for 68 yuan, which covers the bus fare and the five scenic spots of Tanziling. From here you can have a panoramic view of the dam and ship lock, and see the sluices discharging huge floods of water. It takes over an hour for the whole route, then you can return by bus to Yichang.

This huge "book" at Tanziling shows how the Three Gorges Dam was built. (by Joseph Ma)

It takes several hours for a ship to pass the five locks at different levels. (by Song Kaiping)

The Three Gorges Dam is the hottest spot in the new Three Gorges.

The quiet Longjin (Dragon Entering) Stream (by Joseph Ma)



The charming Huanglong (Yellow Dragon) Waterfall (by Joseph Ma)

Shipai Scenic Area

Xiling Gorge is the longest gorge in the area. The major scenic spots are concentrated in the section between the two dams, in the Huangniu (Ox) Gorge and Dengying (Lamp Shadow) Gorge. The most attractive among these is the Shipai (Stone Plate) Scenic Area.

The scenic area is composed of a number of caves, rivers, ruins and memorials. Longjin Stream is a quiet and beautiful river, which winds out of the green mountains to join the Yangtze River. It has now been developed into a scenic area. After buying your entry ticket, you'll be guided by a Tujia girl into the valley. On the way, you'll pass a Tujia Village that has waterwheels, houses that are built on columns and boats with black shelters. Going deep into the valley, you'll see the waterfalls of Huanglong (Yellow Dragon) and Qinying (Zither Eagle). They seem to complement each other, making the environment even more tranquil. If you feel tired and want a break, there is a Tujia-style house, where you can have tea while enjoying folk songs sung by Tujia girls. Walking along the riverside, you can have lunch at a restaurant and try the catfish caught from the river. After lunch, you can choose either to visit the ancient town of Shipai or climb up the mountain for a panoramic view of the Yangtze River from the Lamp Shadow Stone. To enquire about tours in the area, please call: (717) 785 5583.

The Fourth Spring Under Heaven (by Joseph Ma)

The Fairy Stream

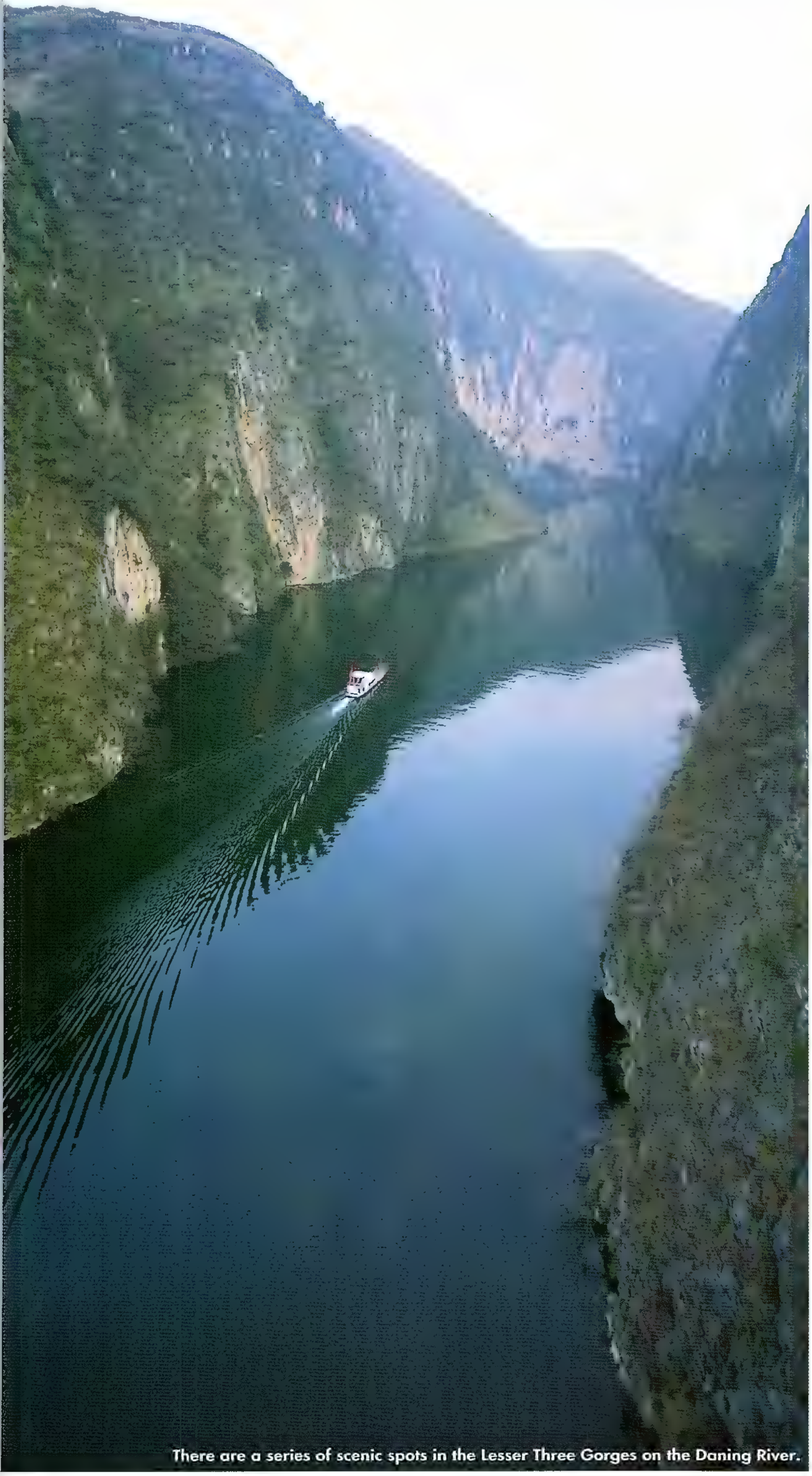
In Wuxia Gorge there is a small stream running by the town of Qingshi. It is named Shennuxi, or Fairy Stream. Even when the Lesser Three Gorges became famous, the Fairy Stream remained unknown, and the locals seldom went upstream. Though I had been photographing the Three Gorges for several years before the dam began to store water, I went upstream only once.

The Goddess Stream offers peculiar mountains, clear water, charming rocks and a mysterious valley. While sailing on the river, the feeling is like roaming through a gallery of fine arts. The most enticing is the Qixiannu (Seven Fairy) Pond, which was said to be where fairies bathe. The local people say that every time there is wind on the stream, it means the fairies are bathing. No one is allowed to peep at the bathing fairies, of course, and anyone who does so is punished. One legend has it that a firewood collector once found a silk scarf on the bank of the pond and brought it home. Soon he became seriously sick. The doctor said it was the scarf that had made him sick, so he should return it as soon as possible. The firewood collector immediately put the scarf back where it was and burned incense to ask the fairies to pardon him. So he recovered. Another legend tells of how a firewood collector found an embroidered shoe floating in the water. He took it to his boat, but found the shoe was tied to an iron chain. He began to drag the chain, but it became longer and longer, and heavier and heavier, almost turning over his boat. He had to let it go, while cold sweat ran down his spine. What's more, there is a modern story about a man electrofishing at the Fairy Stream two years ago. He angered the fairies and became very sick when he returned home.

The mysterious Seven Fairy Pond on the Fairy Stream

A Lovers' Boat designed for sailing on small streams

Three of the Twelve Peaks of Wushan are located in the Fairy Stream Scenic Area, namely Shangsheng Peak, Jingtan Peak and Qiyun Peak. The area also abounds with flora and fauna, including medicinal herbs such as dangzhen (*Codonopsis pilosula*), tianma (*Rhizoma gastrodiae*) and heshouwu (*Polygonum multiflorum*), as well as rare animals such as roe deer, boar, barking deer and pangolin, that find shelter in the mountainous wilderness.



There are a series of scenic spots in the Lesser Three Gorges on the Daning River.

The Lesser Three Gorges on Daning River

While touring the Three Gorges, you should not miss a trip to the Lesser Three Gorges on the Daning River. Sailing upstream, you'll pass the gorges of Longmen, Baxia and Dicui to reach Dachang, an ancient town. Further up, there are scenic spots such as the Bailong Guojiang (White Dragon Crossing the River) Waterfall, the salt producing centre of Ningchang and the Shuangxi Caves.

The Daning River is Yangtze's largest tributary in the Three Gorges. The Lesser Three Gorges, namely Longmen Gorge, Bawu Gorge and Dicui Gorge, are a section of the lower reaches of the Daning River, beginning from Longmen Gorge in the south and ending at Tujia Dam in the north, extending 50 km.

Madu (Horse Ferry) River valley is narrow, rustic, but fantastic. Amazingly, in its lower reaches, there are also three gorges: Sancheng, Qinwang and Changtan, called the Small Three Gorges, with a total length of 20 km. At the river mouth of Madu, visitors can take a fishing boat into the Small Three Gorges. For the return trip, one can either sail on a big wooden ship or take a rubber dinghy for some excitement.

After the completion of the Three Gorges Dam, the rise in water level in the Lesser Three Gorges has not only made the Small Three Gorges passable by boat, but has created another three gorges upstream for tourists who like adventures and rafting. The Daning River presents tourists some new opportunities.

A tourist ship sails between Wushan and Dachang daily. It costs 150 yuan for the boat fare and the admission fee to the Lesser Three Gorges.

The scenery of Dachang ancient town makes a poetic picture.

The Ancient Town of Dachang

Dachang is situated at the conflux of the Daning River and Yangxi Stream, 60 km from Wushan. It's a transfer station between Sichuan, Shaanxi and Hubei, owing to its strategic location with access to the three provinces.

Dachang is famed as an ancient town, where, as the old description goes, "one lamp can light the whole town; people at the four different city gates can talk to one another; and when someone is beaten at the courtroom, the sound can be heard in every household." The houses in town were mostly built during the end of the Ming (1368-1644) or the early stage of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). These simple but stylish houses are some of the best-preserved ancient buildings in the Three Gorges area. The Wen Family Mansion, a structure of the early Qing Dynasty, is in better shape than most. The house of a court official known as a "bagong", it consists of two siheyuan (four sided house compound) with several dozen rooms and three courtyards. However, Dachang is situated at an altitude of 130-140 m above sea level. When the reservoir water level reaches 159 m, the whole town will be submerged and it will be resettled on Dengjia Ridge, three kilometres away.

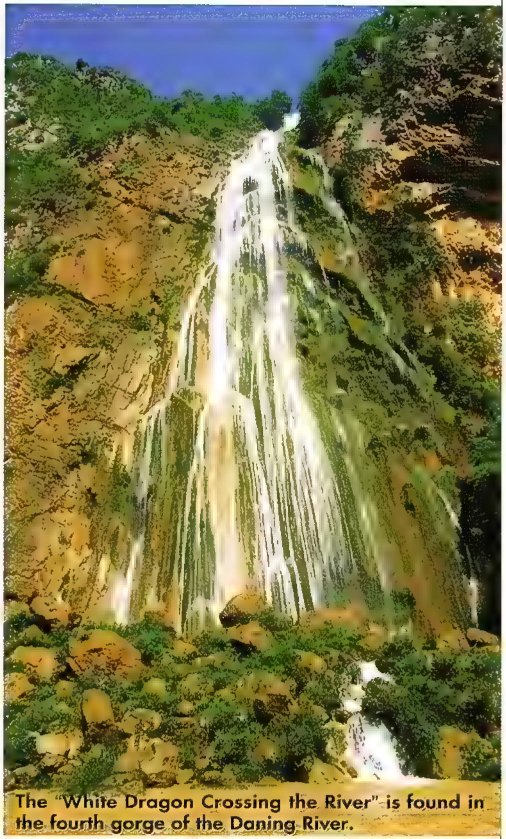
Most of the houses were built more than 100 years ag

White Dragon Crossing the River

Sailing upstream 30 km from Dachang, you'll see the fourth gorge on the Daning River, the Miaoxia (Temple Gorge). The Yuntai (Cloud Terrace) Summit, 1,200 m above sea level, is the highest peak in the gorge.

"White Dragon Crossing the River" is indeed an extraordinary sight. When there is heavy rain, the Longtou (Dragon Head) Mountain on the west bank of the Daning River pours out a powerful spring, which, like a white dragon, flies over the river to the other bank. However, this wonderful view is very hard to catch, even for boatmen on the river, as navigation is forbidden after heavy rain. One summer, I took a small boat into the Temple Gorge. Suddenly a thunderstorm blew up, with lightning and strong wind. The flow of the river water increased remarkably, pushing my tiny boat to the lower reaches. I stayed in a farmer's house on the cliffs for the night. The next day, I watched the "White Dragon Crossing the River" and took pictures of this rarely seen view.

White Dragon landing on the river


The "White Dragon Crossing the River" is found in the fourth gorge of the Daning River.

The Salt City of Ningchang

Ningchang was the Wuxian State described in the ancient book, The Stories of Mountains and Seas. Salt brought prosperity to the place, but sadly, it is only a lost page in history.

After passing Wuxi and Jiandao (Scissors) Gorge, the boat will arrive in Ningchang, a town located 11 km north of the Wuxi county seat, on the borders of Hubei, Sichuan and Shaanxi provinces. Rulers of various dynasties established governments and checkpoints in Ningchang to control the salt trade. It was also because of salt that wars broke out here. For a long time, salt was a vital resource, and whoever controlled salt could rule the other states.

People used wood fires to boil salt before they began to use coal. Four kilograms of wood had to be burned to produce half a kilogram of salt. If the town turned out five million kilograms of salt a year, it needed to burn 40 million kilograms of wood. Consequently, the forests were destroyed and the salt factories closed.

Ruins of a salt-making area

The local people call salt "yanba", adding a "ba" after "yan", or salt. This can be traced to the ancient Ba State, which occupied today's Three Gorges area. Because they had the resources and knew the technique of salt making, the Ba people were envied by those in the surrounding areas who made a living from farming or hunting. In recent years, a large quantity of salt-making tools and plank roads for salt shipping were unearthed in the counties of Zhongxian, Kaixian, Yunyang, Wuxi and Badong. Salt-making facilities used 3,000-4,000 years ago were found at the ruins of an ancient salt-drying pond in Jingzhongba, Zhongxian County.

Ninghcang was once a prosperous salt city.

The formations in the Lingong Cave look very much like landscapes of magnificent mountains and rivers.

The stalactites in various shapes become even more attractive when lit up.

Shuangxi Limestone Cave

You can find the Shuangxi Limestone Cave by walking two kilometres up the Daning River to the north. Here, steep cliffs rise on both banks of the river, with five limestone caves dotted on each side. These caves served as shelters for the local people to hide from wars and bandit attacks. Today, five of the caves have become tourist attractions. Huilong Cave is in the shape of a crouched dragon, and its name means "Returned Dragon". Jinshi (Golden Lion) Cave houses a pair of lively stone lions. Following the stairs outside Jinshi Cave to pass the caves of Wuming (Anonymous) and Tianxing (Heavenly Star), you'll reach the main cave, Lingong.

With a length of more than 1,000 m, the cave is divided into five sections. Its walls are like pictures of imposing landscapes. In the centre of the big hall stands the Sea-pacifying Celestial Needle, which is considered a national treasure.

The clear water of Shennong Stream runs in a quiet valley.

Rafting in the Shennong Gorge on a tiny pea-shaped boat. (by Joseph Ma)

Shennong Stream

The river runs 60 km from a forest on Shennongjia to join the Yangtze River at the east end of Wuxia Gorge in Badong County, Hubei Province. Legend says that in prehistoric times, Emperor Yandi, or the Celestial Farmer (Shennong), tasted all kinds of herbs in the area to look for medicinal ones. As many rare and precious herbs grew on high cliffs, he had to build a platform to reach them. So the place was given the name Shennongjia, meaning the "Celestial Farmer's Shelf". Many clear waters run among the limestone peaks of Shennongjia. Shennong Stream is one of them.

The stream is crystal clear. In the valley, there are unique tourist attractions such as Hanging Coffins, ancient plank roads and villages of the Tujia people. In the past, a 20 km section of the river was developed for rafting. Tourists reached the rafting area by bus and rafted down the river to the Yangtze River in small boats. Since the Yangtze was dammed on June 1, 2003, the water level in the Shennong Stream has risen, making it no good for drifting. Now, tourists can take a ship at Badong New City to cruise the valley.

Visitors can register at the Changjiang Hotel in Badong New City for a one-day tour of Shennong Stream.

Add: Chaoyang Road, Xinjing Town; Tel: (718) 433 0049.

Tips for Touring the New Three Gorges

Photos & Article by Joseph Ma

The massive reconstruction in the area may cause difficulties for self-guided tourists to the Three Gorges, especially when some ferries and bus stations are disorganised, making transport inconvenient.

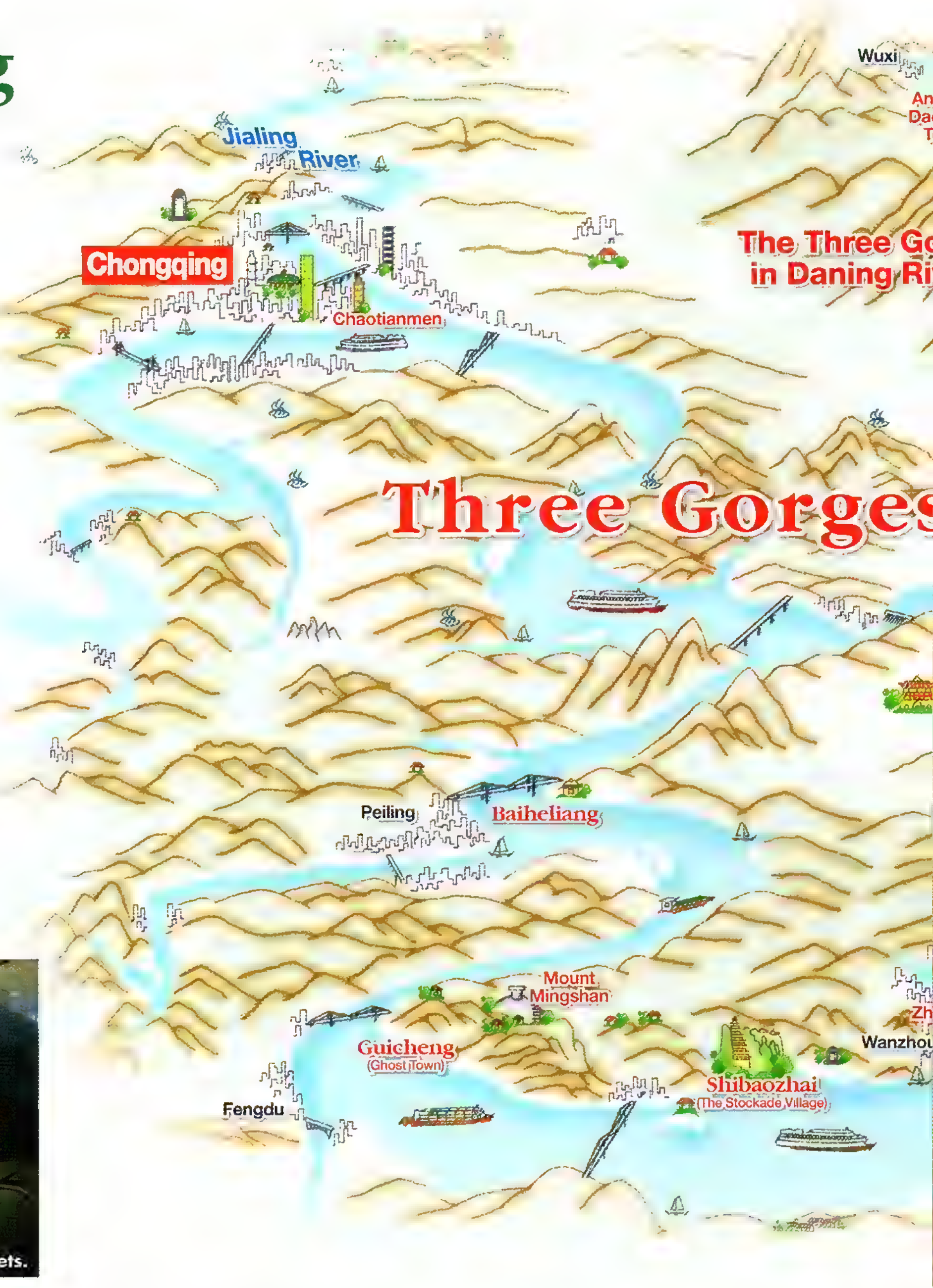
Many of my friends regretted not having visited the area before last June before the river was dammed. The formerly dangerous Three Gorges has become a broad and peaceful lake. When the Three Gorges Project is entirely completed, the river level will be 40 m higher, and most of the gorges will be submerged. So, despite the mess and inconvenience, you should pick up your bag right now and set out for a trip to the Three Gorges before it is too late.

Transport Arrangement

Most tourists like to start from Chongqing or Yichang to travel down the Yangtze River by ship. Passenger ship is the main means of transportation in the Three Gorges. The only thing is that the schedules change frequently, making it hard for travellers to follow. The schedules are relatively stable at Chongqing, Yichang and Maoping. At some minor stops, the timetable is roughly written on a blackboard, which is not only hard to recognise, but hard to trust. Even when you ask the clerks, you cannot get a sure answer. My experience is that for a short journey, buses are better. When I take a ship for a long trip, which has to pass through the Three

丰都
石宝寨
(巴东神农溪)
重庆
20:00
22:00
Passengers line up to buy their ship tickets.

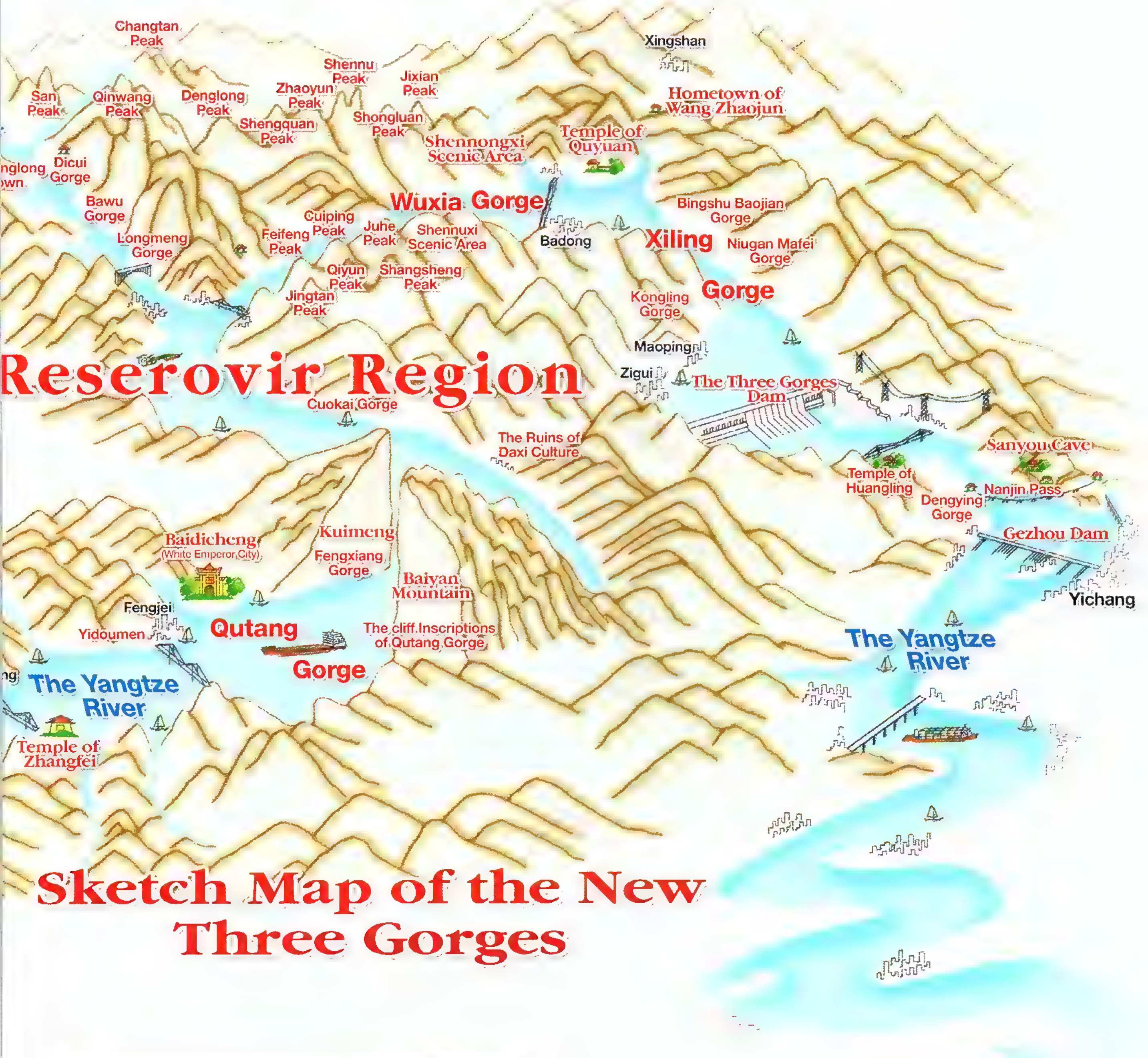
新三峡游程
国内旅游精品线路
市内一日游
大足石刻一日游
Many hotels in the Chaotianmen Ferry area offer to buy tickets for their guests.



Timetable of Speedboats

Route		Chongqing	Peiling	Fendu	Zhongxian	Wanxian	Shuangjiang	Yunyang	Fengjie	Wushan	Badong	Zigui	Xiangxi	Maoping	Yichang
Chongqing — Yichang	Time Price Km	07:00	09:05 80 124	10:00 105 178	11:00 140 240	12:40 185 329	13:05 210 359	13:30 220 389	14:20 260 452	15:00 275 491	16:00 345 547	16:25 365 576	16:35 370 584	17:05 380 615	18:35 400 661
Wanxian — Yichang	Time Price Km					09:30	10:00 20 30	10:30 30 60	11:50 260 123	12:30 120 162	13:30 150 218	14:00 165 247	14:10 170 255	14:50 200 286	16:15 220 332
Wushan — Yichang	Time Price Km									07:30	08:30 50 56	09:00 65 85	09:10 70 93	09:40 110 124	11:00 125 170

Route		Yichang	Maoping	Xiangxi	Zigui	Badong	Wushan	Fengjie	Yunyang	Shuangjiang	Wanxian	Zhongxian	Fendu	Peiling	Chongqing
Yichang — Chongqing	Time Price Km	06:00	07:40 30 46	08:10 60 77	06:20 60 85	08:50 90 114	09:50 125 170	10:40 150 209	11:40 190 272	12:10 205 302	12:40 220 332	14:05 275 421	15:05 330 483	16:05 340 537	18:10 410 661
Yichang — Wanxian	Time Price Km	10:00	11:40 30 46	12:15 60 77	12:25 60 85	12:55 90 114	13:50 125 170	14:30 150 209	16:00 190 272	16:40 205 302	17:30 220 332				
Yichang — Wushan	Time Price Km	13:20	14:40 30 46	15:10 60 77	15:20 60 85	16:00 90 114	17:00 125 170								


Changtan Peak
Shennu Peak
Jixian Peak
Xingshan
San Peak
Qinwang Peak
Denglong Peak
Zhaoyun Peak
Shengquan Peak
Shongluan Peak
Shennongxi Scenic Area
Temple of Quyuan
Hometown of Wang Zhaojun
nglong own
Dicui Gorge
Bawu Gorge
Longmeng Gorge
Feifeng Peak
Cuiping Peak
Juhe Peak
Shennuxi Scenic Area
Wuxia Gorge
Badong
Bingshu Baojian Gorge
Xiling
Niugan Mafei Gorge
Qiyun Peak
Shangsheng Peak
Jingtan Peak
Kongling Gorge
Gorge
Maoping
Reserovir Region
Cuokai Gorge
Zigui
The Three Gorges Dam
The Ruins of Daxi Culture
Sanyou Cave
Temple of Huangling
Nanjin Pass
Dengying Gorge
Gezhou Dam
Baidicheng
(White Emperor City)
Kuimeng
Fengxiang Gorge
Baiyan Mountain
Yichang
Fengjei
Yidoumen
Qutang
Gorge
The cliff Inscriptions of Qutang Gorge
The Yangtze River
The Yangtze River
Temple of Zhangfei
Sketch Map of the New Three Gorges

A fast speedboat

Gorges, I check the ship schedule frequently.

Passenger Ships in the Three Gorges

Ferries: The fare is low, but conditions are not good. A third-class ticket or above will get you a sleeper in a cabin. This kind of ship is good for sightseeing in the Three Gorges, but remember to take good care of your belongings.

Speedboat: Fast transport, it only takes one day to go from Chongqing to Yichang. But there is not enough room for passengers to admire the scenery, and the fare is high.

Luxury passenger ship: There are two kinds of ship in this category, for overseas visitors and domestic visitors. The former are for tourist groups from abroad and Hong Kong or Macao. The fare is high. Most self-guided tourists take the latter kind, for which you can buy your ticket in Chongqing or Yichang. A ship in this category is the best choice, for it makes stops at major scenic attractions on the way (ie. the Fengdu Ghost City, Shibao Fortress, Zhang Fei's Temple, the Lesser Three Gorges and Shennong Stream).

City transport

Taxis are available in all cities on the way from Chongqing to Yichang. The charge is reasonable, starting from five yuan (~US $0.5). From the Liberation Monument in downtown Chongqing to the Nan'an or Jiangbei district, it takes about half an hour for a price of 20 yuan. Your taxi driver can serve as your tour guide as well.

Accommodation

All cities in the area have good hotels, the majority being three-star ones. When you check in, be bold to ask for a discount. In slow seasons, as I was there in November, the price can be halfed.

Chongqing
(better stay in Yuzhong District in downtown, where transport of bus or ship is convenient.)

Chaotianmen Hotel ★★★

Standard room: 378 yuan, slow season: 200 yuan*;
Add: 18 Xinyi Street, Yuzhong District;
Tel: (23) 6310 1888

*It's three minutes' walk from the Chaotianmen Ferry. The hotel is well equipped; most of the rooms have river view.

Sanxia (Three Gorges) Hotel ★★

Standard room: 260-360 yuan, 50 percent lower in slow seasons;
Add: 1 Shaanxi Road, Yuzhong District;
Tel: (23) 6383 1112

It is located opposite the Chaotianmen Hotel. It has convenient transport and acceptable facilities.

The Wushan Guesthouse in Wushan Badong

Haiyi Hotel ★★★★★ The most luxury hotel in Chongqing, it costs 1,300 yuan for a standard room. It offers 50 percent discount in slow season.
Add: Wuyi Road, Yuzhong District;
Tel: (23) 6730 0888

It is close to the city's business centre, convenient for shopping and entertainment.

Yudu Hotel ★★★

Standard room: 280 yuan;
Add: 168 Bayi Road, Yuzhong District;
Tel: (23) 6382 8888

It has a very favourable location.

Fengdu

Huangdu Hotel ★★★

Standard room: 160 yuan;
Add: Pingdu Boulevard, Sanhe Town;
Tel: (23) 7070 7888

It is located in the city centre, close to the ferry.

Grand Hotel Hongsheng ★★★

Standard room: 180 yuan;
Add: 88 Pingdu Road West, Sanhe Town;
Tel: (23) 7072 6666

The hotel is in a magnificent style and on its opposite there is a shopping centre.

Zhongxian

Sanxiafeng Hotel ★★★

Standard room: 408 yuan, 220 yuan in slow seasons;
Add: 11 Guoyuan Road, Zhongzhou Town;
Tel: (23) 5424 8888

It is located on a terrace, some distance away from downtown.

Wanzhou

Qianxi Hotel ★★★

Standard room: 480 yuan, 238 in slow seasons;
Add: 136 Taibai Road;
Tel: (23) 5810 4999

It is conveniently located in downtown, with good transport.

Dasanxia Hotel ★★

Standard room: 148-178 yuan;
Add: 165 Taibai Road;
Tel: (23) 8510 4800

It is on the opposite of Qianxi Hotel, with acceptable conditions and reasonable price.

Wushan

Wushan Guesthouse ★★★

Standard room: 320-380 yuan, could be 50 percent lower in slow seasons;
Add: Guangdong Road Central;
Tel: (23) 5768 8988

It is situated in the most prosperous business area.

Badong

Changjiang Hotel

Standard room: 158-168 yuan, 70 percent in slow season;
Add: Chaoyang (Xiyi) Road, Xinling Town;
Tel: (718) 433 0049

A family inn with elegant decoration, it is within the walking distance from the ferry.

National Committee Centre of the CPPCC

National Committee Centre of the CPPCC

Standard room: 268 yuan, 200 yuan in slow seasons;
Add: Xi'er Road, Xirangpo;
Tel: (718) 433 2688

A luxury hotel in town, it opens to non-members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) too. 10 minutes' drive from the ferry.

Maoping
(the new county seat of Zigui)

Zigui Hotel ★★★

The Huangdu Hotel in Fengdu

Standard room: 288 yuan, 198 for slow seasons;
Add: Wuhan Road, Maoping;
Tel: (717) 288 6188

It is conveniently located in downtown.

Haili Hotel ★★★

Standard room: 208-238 yuan, 20 percent lower in slow seasons;
Add: Danyang Road, Maoping;
Tel: (138) 7267 9888

It is a new hotel with good service.

Yichang

Yangguang Hotel ★★

Standard room: 198-216 yuan, 150-170 in slow seasons;
Add: 1 Yunji Road;
Tel: (717) 644 6086

It has the railway station in front of it and many shops nearby.

Pinghu Hotel ★★★

Standard room: 360 yuan, 250 in slow seasons;
Add: 53 Dongshan Boulevard;
Tel: (717) 673 7788

It is located on the main street of the city, with convenient transport.

Shanzhuang Hotel ★★★

Standard room 200-280 yuan, 10-20 percent off in slow seasons;
Add: 105 Dongshan Boulevard;
Tel: (717) 645 7780

It is situated on a terrace west of the railway station, with quiet environment.

Xinshiji (New Century) Hotel

Standard room: 168-178 yuan, 20 percent off in slow season;
Tel: (717) 644 2411

This small hotel is located close to the railway station and business centre, where transport is very convenient.

The Zigui Hotel in Maoping

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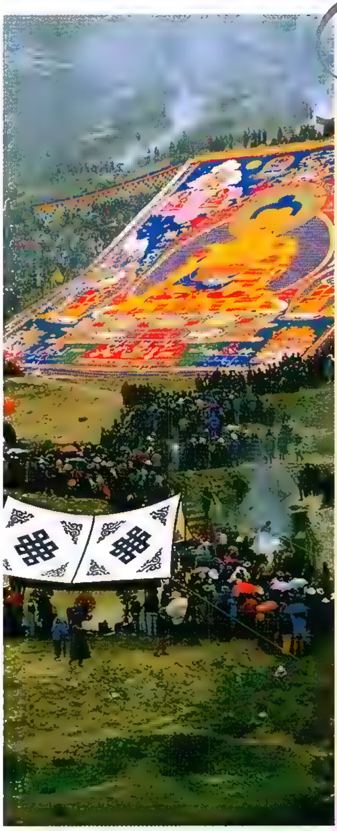
*US $1 ~ 8 yuan

JUL/AUG



Aug 15-22
Lhasa, Tibet

In the Tibetan language the word "shoton" refers to "yogurt banquet". The **Shoton Festival** had its beginning prior to the 17th century. By Buddhists discipline, monks are confined in their monasteries for several dozen days until summer is over. When the day of "confinement" is over, local people would treat the monks to banquets, at which yogurt is served liberally. Presently, "sunning the Buddha" (giant tangkha-portraits for the Buddha are brought out of the monasteries and unfolded in the sun for public display), trade fairs, and Tibetan opera contests are held for seven days.

Aug 9
Liangshan, Sichuan

During the **Torch Festival** of the Yi ethnic group, torches are erected in front of every household, and a pile of branches of several metres high is erected in the centre of a square. When night falls, and gongs and horns are sounded, people of all ages come forward to make the bonfire. There will be bullfighting, horse races, cockfighting, sheep fighting, singing contests, a Yi ethnic group beauty contest, wrestling, local-style dance contest, a torch parade and bonfire party.

Aug 20-26
Turpan, Xinjiang

Tourists may attend Uygur wedding ceremonies and local dances at the **Xinjiang Grape Festival**. In addition, travellers may visit the grape, melon and fruit streets and see how the camel teams travel along the Silk Road as they did 2,000 years ago.

Aug 14-29
Qingdao City, Shandong

The **Qingdao International Beer Festival** is the largest beer festival in China, and it attracts breweries from all over the world. Held in China's largest Beer City, Qingdao, last year festival was attended by more than one million visitors who purchased a total of 740 tn of beers! There will be large performances, fashion shows, ocean-side fireworks, sporting events, trade fairs and symposiums of brewing technology.

TSINGTAO BEER
青島啤酒
TSINGTAO BREWERY
TSINGTAO, CHINA

Aug 13-22
Tainan City, Taiwan

Aug 22 is Chinese Valentine's Day this year, which celebrates the legend of the Cowherd and the Weaving Maid. Tainan City combines the beauty of this legend with art, and it adds a traditional coming-of-age ceremony for the teenagers of 16 years old at the **Tainan International Chihsi Arts Festival**.

Aug 12-16
Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Watch culinary experts whip up a fancy dish at the **Food Expo 2004**! Filled with daily entertainment performance by local artists, this event also has cooking demonstrations by gourmet chefs, games and contests with prizes as well as complimentary or discount coupons to visitors.

Aug 10-16
Nagqu Prefecture, Tibet

As the most important festival in northern Tibet, the annual **Qiangtang Horse Race Festival** attracts thousands of herdsmen riding their fine horses and carrying their local products to Nagqu. Not only will there be thrilling horse race, archery and demonstrations of horsemanship, but also songs and dance troupes from all part of Tibet.

Cliff Carving Spotted at Mount Lushan

A 1,300-year-old cliff carving was found at a temple at Mount Lushan in Jiangxi Province. This was the oldest cliff carving ever spotted at Mount Lushan, a world cultural heritage site, and the only carving dating back from the Tang Dynasty (618-907). It was discovered in an ancient temple on the northern part of the scenic mountain during a recent cultural relics survey in the region.

The obverse side of the object was engraved with three big Chinese characters "Haihui Temple", the original name of the ancient temple, plus the title of the reign of Empress Wu Zetian during the Tang dynasty, which was 1,309 years ago. The reverse side bears a poem written in 1738. Currently, the lower part of the carving is still submerged in mud.

Bus line between China and Tajikistan

International Trade Centre, K

The 670-km bus line, running from Xinjiang's Kashi City to Khorugh City, capital of Badakhshan region in Tajikistan, began operation at the end of June. Each city sends a bus to the other city on the sixth, 16th and 26th day every month.

The operation of the bus line made Tajikistan the fifth country to have cross-border exit and entry transport with the autonomous region, together with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Pakistan.

anoi, Vietnam

China Remains Vietnam's Biggest Tourist Market

China remained the biggest tourist market of Vietnam in the first five months of this year with a year-on-year rise of 20 percent in the number of mainland Chinese visitors.

In the period, Vietnam welcomed about 320,000 visitors from the Chinese mainland, or almost 30 percent of the total number of international arrivals to the country.

The majority of Chinese people, who often go to Vietnam on holidays, visit the World Heritage-listed Ha Long Bay in northern Quang Ninh province.

Shangri-La's Airport

The first helicopter airport for transporting tourists to and from the Tibet Autonomous Prefecture of Deqen, popularly known as Shangri-La, will soon be built.

The heliport is about 13 km from the county seat of Deqen in southwest China's Yunnan Province and its construction will cost 37.5 million yuan (US $4.5 million).

Deqen is situated at heart of the protected area of the "Three Parallel Rivers". It was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2002. The prefecture became famous at home and abroad because it is endowed with snow-topped mountains, vast plateau meadows and traditional folk arts.

Taizi Snow Mountain, Deqin

Zimbabwe to Accommodate Chinese Tourists

The Zimbabwe Tourism Authority has begun courting registered tour operators to accommodate Chinese tourists as part of its effort to promote tourism.

Zimbabwe was one of the several African countries, which were granted the approved destination status (ADS) by China during the China-Africa Cooperation Forum held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in December last year. The ADS status is expected to benefit Zimbabwe as increasing number of Chinese tourists are travelling abroad.

Ancient Phoenix City to Be Legally Protected

Phoenix City, and other places of cultural heritage in central China's Hunan Province will soon be protected by law.

According to the new protection regulation, the construction, size and colours of renovations in the city centre must adhere to Ming (1368-1644) and Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) patterns and styles. No historically valuable streets will be widened or narrowed, and protected areas will only be accessed by pedestrians and emergency vehicles.

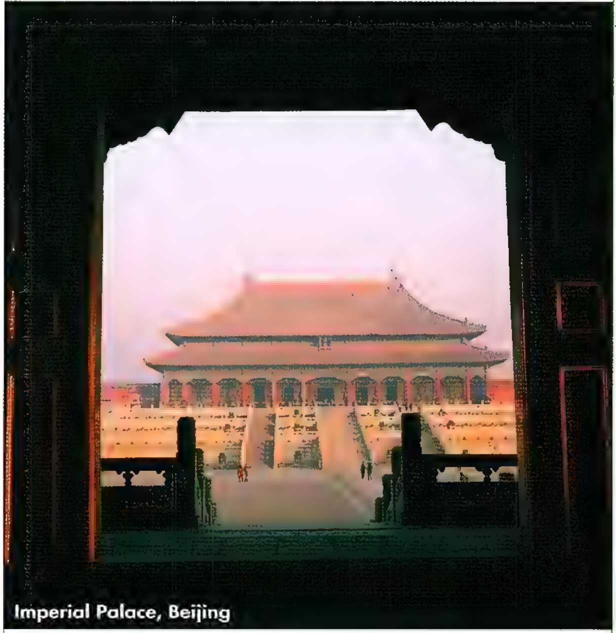
Phoenix City, Xiangxi

Langkawi beach, Malaysia

Internet-visa to Malaysia

Chinese tourists to Malaysia can now apply for their visas via the Internet. The process, which is being carried out on a trial basis in Shanghai, will be expanded eventually.

Meanwhile, Malaysia Airlines had increased its flights to Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, while talks were being held for direct flights between Kuala Lumpur and Chengdu.



Imperial Palace, Beijing

Three Sites to Bid for Heritage List

China has worked to add three historical sites, including the imperial palace, imperial mausoleum and tombs for nobles belonging to the ancient Gaogouli regime, to the World Cultural Heritage List of UNESCO at an international heritage conference.

The other two sites are the three imperial mausoleums dedicated to first and second emperors and the two empresses of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), as well as to the ancestors of the emperors, all of which are in Shenyang, capital of Liaoning Province, and the Shenyang Imperial Palace of the early Qing Dynasty.

Buddhist Sculptures in Dajue Temple Being Restored

Restoration work on the 24 sculptures of the 18 arhats and other Buddhist figures in the Dajue Temple has entered its final phase.

The Dajue Buddhist Temple is located outside of Beijing and was built during the Song Dynasty (960-1279). The 18 arhats are famous figures in Buddhist legends who were led by the Buddha and can defend the world with their magic.

Black Boxes Installed on Beijing Buses

Some 170 long-distance and other tourist buses in Beijing have been equipped with black boxes, similar to the flight recorders used in planes.

Driving information such as time, speed and mileage will be recorded by the black boxes, while the buses' license plate number, colour and driver's license number will also be registered to ensure all necessary information is immediately on hand if an accident should occur.

Eating Away Ancient Buildings

White ants are threatening the ancient buildings in Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province, an ancient city with a history of more than 2,000 years old.

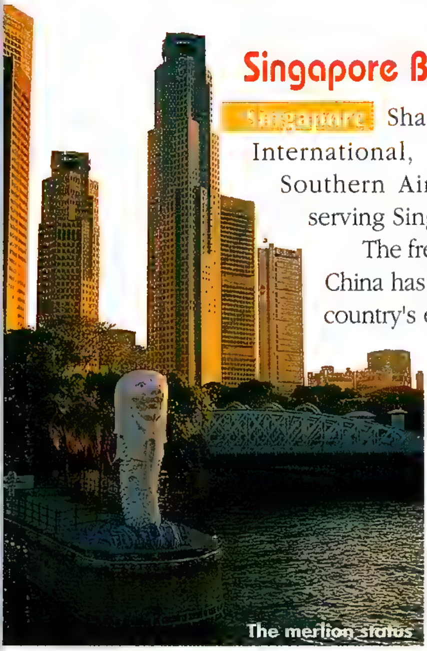
A large number of local residents' homes have already been damaged by the insects. Before the 1990s, Xi'an had few such insects but since then, as the climate gets warmer and damper, more white ants have been carried into the city with materials and commodities in growing trade from the south. Besides the ancient and local residential buildings, more than 20 percent of Xi'an's forest and cash crops were also eaten by the insects. Due to that, Xi'an suffered losses of more than 300 million yuan (US $36 million) last year.

Ancient fortress, Shaanxi

Visa-free Study Tours to Japan

After waiving the visa commission charge for short-term student visitors from China in April, Japan waived short-term visas for Chinese primary and middle school students going to Japan on study tours.

The policy was aimed at attracting more Chinese students to undertake study tours in Japan.


The merlion status

Singapore Boosts China Air Links

Singapore Shandong Airlines joined Air China International, China Eastern Airlines, China Southern Airlines, and Xiamen Airlines in serving Singapore.

The frequency of flights to Singapore from China has mushroomed in recent years as the country's economy booms. This is due to the effort China's government has put in to make it easier for Chinese to get passports and foreign currency. Additionally, many countries have eased restrictions on visas for Chinese nationals.

In 1998, about 300,000 Chinese visited Singapore. By 2002, Chinese arrivals had more than doubled to 670,000.

Flag Raising Ceremony Gets a Makeover

Beijing The raising of the Chinese flag at Tiananmen Square in Beijing is a poplar tourist attraction, and it got a makeover in June.

The national anthem was to play live three times a month, but now two performances have been removed from the ceremony. On the first day of every month, a military band of 62 musicians will perform live as the escort raising the flag. On the other days, the flag will be hoisted to recorded accompaniment.

The Monument of People's Heros in Tiananmen Square

Donglin Temple, Lushan Mountain

Free Entrance to the World Heritage Site

Jiangxi Soldiers, retired military officers, people with disability, or visitors who are below 14 or over 70, are now allowed free entrance to the world heritage site at Lushan Mountain in eastern China.

Although some 7,000 people have been spared paying for entry since May, Lushan Mountain has witnessed a 55-percent growth in ticket sales and played host to some 130,000 visitors.

Situated on the bank of the Yangtze River, Lushan Mountain was listed as a World Heritage in 1996 for its ancient history as China's education and religious centre. Early this year, it was listed as one of the first groups of World Geological Parks for its valuable remains of the Fourth Ice Age.

Birds Forest in Qipan Mountain

Liaoning Since the Birds Forest of Shenyang Qipan Mountain received more than one thousand birds, it has become people's favourite place to spend the holidays.

Qipan Mountain has a 40,000-m^2 bird forest, where birds can fly freely in. Besides the bird forest, the scenic spot of Qipan Mountain also prepared other amusement items for tourists.

New Shanghai-Beijing-Amsterdam Service

Shanghai Effective May 1, 12 nations of the European Union were formally opened to the Chinese citizens as new overseas tourist destinations.

China Southern Airlines launched a new service from Shanghai to Amsterdam via Beijing at the end of June. The new Boeing 777 Shanghai-Beijing-Amsterdam service operated under a code-share agreement with KLM Royal Dutch Airlines.

China Southern's new Shanghai (Pudong) - Beijing - Amsterdam roundtrip service, is available every Monday, Thursday and Sunday (China Southern flight numbers CZ343/344), departing from Shanghai's Pudong International Airport at 10:00 a.m. and arriving at Beijing at 11:55 a.m., then continuing on to Amsterdam and arriving at Schiphol Airport Amsterdam at 17:50 (local time).

The Bund

Longmen Cliff, Xishan, Kunming

Top-selling Map of Public Toilets

Yunnan A map of public toilets became a best-seller in the streets of Kunming City, southwest China.

The map, printed by a local survey and mapping institute at the request of tourists and locals alike, highlighted 325 public toilets in the city, all of which were within 20 m from the city's main streets.

The map has also included a detailed schedule of inbound and outbound trains at Kunming Railway Station, and can be used as a road map for drivers since it has marked clearly all the major gas stations, parking lots, car washing services and repair centres in the city.

For the convenience of tourists the map also provides some important tips, such as what numbers they should dial to get travel related services or to lodge a complaint.

Dubbed "the city of spring", Kunming is capital of the southwestern Yunnan Province, which boasts hundreds of tourist attractions and a rich variety of tropical and subtropical plants.

US Airlines's New Services in China

China American Northwest Airlines launched new services on routes from Beijing and Shanghai to the United States via Tokyo. From October, newly delivered Airbus A330-200 long-haul aircrafts will fly routes to Beijing. The company will also introduce self-service checking equipment in Beijing International Airport by the end of this year.

Jinan-Singapore Flight Launched

Shandong China's Shandong Airlines launched its first international flight and landed at Singapore Changi Airport. With the arrival of Shandong Airlines, Changi is served by over 70 airlines operating more than 3,400 flights to 163 cities in 52 countries.

Shandong Airlines flies twice weekly between Jinan and Singapore via Shenzhen. The flight arrives in Singapore at 15:15 and departs at 16:15 to Jinan via Shenzhen every Wednesday and Saturday.

Jinan is Shandong's political, economic and cultural centre and is well known as the "City of Springs". The city has 72 springs including the Baotu, Pearl, Black Tiger and the Five-Dragon Pond springs.

Chengdu's English-speaking Police Team

Sichuan An English-speaking patrol police team hit the street in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province in June.

Tibetan shop in Chengdu

The English-speaking patrol team is composed of 22 policemen aged from 22 to 24, who received formal English language training. The team offered services to English-speaking visitors who ask for directions, or reporting to the police departments.

With rapid economic growth, the number of foreigners working and living in Chengdu was on the rise.

Squirrels to Highlight Scenic Island in Harbin

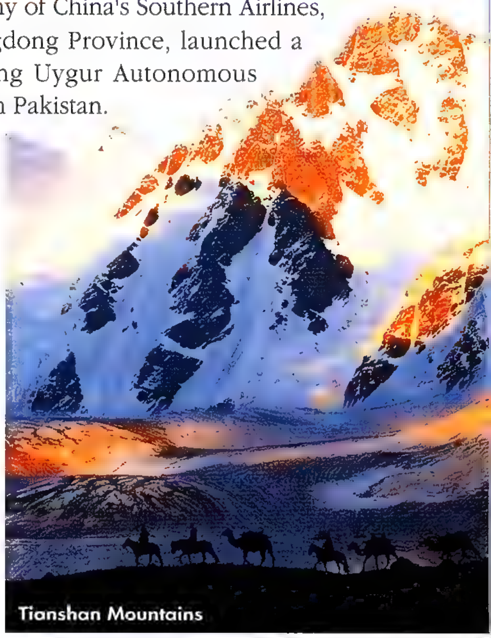
Heilongjiang Squirrels have become another attraction on Sun Island, a major tourist destination in Harbin, capital of the northeastern Heilongjiang Province.

Several hundred squirrels have so far moved into a 2.4-ha squirrels' land on Sun Island, where tourists can feed and be with these lively creatures up close.

Sun Island is located in the middle of the Songhua River, a tributary of the Heilongjiang River that runs across the province. It is covered with trees, lawns, flowered terraces and waterside pavilions; it has a dyke that encircles the island to protect it against flooding.

More Flights to Pakistan

Xinjiang The Xinjiang company of China's Southern Airlines, based in south China's Guangdong Province, launched a new route linking the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in northwest China with Pakistan.



Tianshan Mountains

The new line flies from Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang, to Islamabad, with a stopover in Kashi, in southern Xinjiang. Two return flights are offered on the new route every week.

To date, two routes are available linking Urumqi with Islamabad, including a non-stop one already in operation, offering four flights in total every week and greatly increasing traffic convenience between the two destinations.

The Lost Summer Palace: Tuguhun

Photos by Shi Baoxiu Article by Liu Jun

Dulan County, located west of Xining, is a town of great historical and cultural importance in the Qaidam basin, Qinghai Province.

It was past noon by the time we arrived in Dulan County. Just the exotic sound of the name "Dulan" reminded me of "Loulan", of the famous Silk Road. Although they are not connected, both triggered associations with mysterious and remote lands.

Dulan County was the capital of the Tuguhun Kingdom from 417-688. Today, two sacrificial altars of the Tuguhun Kingdom remain on Kecuo Mountain in Yingder. Kecuo is split into Great and Small Kecuo. Great Kecuo was where the Tuguhun king went to escape the summer heat after worshipping in Yingder.

The next morning, we set off in two jeeps in search of Great Kecuo. After two to three kilometres we hit a dirt road that stretched amidst wild weeds. Our driver was a young man who told us that Great Kecuo was 20 km away, but there were no paved road.

The roads were difficult to navigate, for they had been driven over by too many motorbikes and tractors and thus

forming deep ditches. Our jeeps lurched and jumped all over the place, and when we accidentally hit large rocks, passengers either hit their heads or bumped their rumps. It took us over two hours to travel less than 20 km.

Finally we arrived at mountain ranges full of ancient cypress trees. Our driver got out, took a look and sighed to our dismay, "This is Small Kecuo" . It turned out that we had come to the wrong Kecuo.

A Mountain for Him, a Mountain for Her

"Kecuo" is the name of a magic mountain, and its north slope is called "Small Kecuo" or "Women's Mountain", while the southern face is called "Great Kecuo", "Men's Mountain". Only at Great Kecuo will you find flowing streams and abundant cypress woods. This is the most beautiful and charming part of Chadamu. Small Kecuo before us had its share of cypress trees but they were relatively sparse. The mountain undulates softly like the curves of a woman's body.

A short snack break later, we started climbing up the mountain. The higher up we went, the grass became sparser, until it was just bare soil. At 4000 m, everyone felt the effects of high altitude, and was huffing and puffing with each difficult step. But the panoramic view at the top was worth the hardship. The linked and layered mountain ranges resembled wrinkles on a cow's back, and at the edge of the horizon, where a faint grey-yellow could be seen, were sand dunes and Gobi desert at the rim of the Qaidam basin. "Qaidam" means salt marshes in

1. Gazing at Qaidam basin from the hills of Small Kecuo
2. Our jeep stuck in the muddy river (By Liu Jun)
3. Small Kecuo is full of ancient cypresses.

Mongolian. The township of Dulan is situated on the southeast edge of the Qaidam basin.

Second Attempt at the Great Kecuo

The thwarted first attempt to meet the Great Kecuo only reinforced our resolve. Friends brought us a guide named Ma, a thin tanned Muslim man of around 60 years old.

We were on the road soon after five in the morning, and it wasn't even light when I knocked on Ma's door.

Our jeep bounced around on the dirt roads hitting rock banks one minute, going down gullies, or finding ourselves between cliff faces the next moment. In the bright morning sun, houses could be seen at the foot of the mountain. Ma pointed to the Yingder sheep farm where the road splits to go to Great and Small Kecuo. I realised that our mistake yesterday was not turning right here, and driving straight ahead instead.

We entered the pasture after turning right at the sheep farm. Suddenly, a muddy river of 10 m wide appeared before us. Apparently the water had come from where the pasture and the sheep farm intersected. There were tyre treads on the muddy river's surface, so I didn't even think before pressing hard on the accelerator. But the jeep stalled as soon as it hit the mud. It turned out that the surface of the mud had been baked into a hard shell of 6-9 cm thick, but underneath was runny mud. It was safe for people to walk on but not for cars. We needed to be towed out, and Ma went to the farm to look for a tractor.

The Death of Thousand-Year-Old Cypresses

In around an hour the unmistakeable sputters of a tractor came from the direction of the farm, and soon we saw a small four-wheel drive tractor. With an easy grunt, the tractor pulled our jeep out of the muddy river.

When the jeep clambered up from a ditch, Great Kecuo appeared before us suddenly. It was a natural wonderland of untamed cypress forests and spectacular rock formations. At its foot was a large grass field backed by forest. Ma mentioned that when the Qinghai-Tibet Highway was being built, the construction workers had cut down and used many 1000-year-old cypresses as burning fuel to cook their meals. More trees greeted us on the mountain, all cypresses of different shapes and sizes.

The larger ones would take at least two people holding hands to encircle, and even the younger ones would be over 100 years old. We noticed with sadness about the tree stumps at the foot of the mountain. Knowing that it is impossible to bring the trees back to life reinforced the notion that while nature's gifts are bountiful, they are not inexhaustible. On the way here from Qinghai Lake we hadn't seen many trees, not to mention forests. Signs of human destruction aside, one cannot help be awed by the majestic Great Kecuo, with its soaring peaks, sharp ridges and chiselled surfaces—it does possess a masculine beauty.

Our jeep drove over a hill to a summer farm and we saw two tents and a herd of cattle and sheep. Because Great Kecuo is 4,500 m above sea level, snow is common even in autumn. The nomads must take advantage of the short summer to herd the livestock. At this point, a boy of 8 or 9 years old came running out of the tent and hushed the wildly barking Tibetan Mastiff.

Mushrooms in the Valley

Quickly he ran towards Ma and spoke in Tibetan, and it was clear that they were good friends. They walked towards the green slopes, chatting happily and picking mushrooms from the ground as they went. By this time, the sky was an intense blue, and sun filtered through the dense cypresses and fell onto the flowered hills in a golden shower. The high altitude here means that slightly

1. **The owner brings the cows to the summer farms to provide fresh milk.**
2. **Rape flowers in full bloom by the river on the road to Great Kecuo**
3. **It takes two to three people to enclose one of these 1000-year-old cypresses.**
4. **An ancient tree felled in the construction of the Qinghai-Tibet Highway. (By Liu Jun)**

brisk walking induces heart palpitations and serious panting. But the dense vegetation makes up for the thin air and a short rest will suffice to replenish energy.

The hills and valleys are overgrown with grass in which flowers bloom. The wildflowers, mainly white, range from lotus-sized to as small as rice grains. They sway and dance to the rhythm of the wind, like drunken fairies.

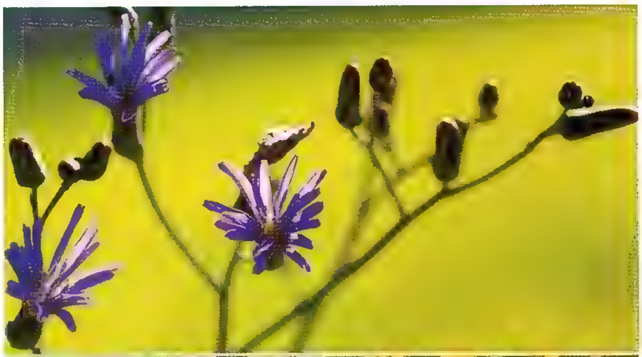
By the time we crossed a few foothills and got back, Ma and the boy were already resting on the grass beside the jeep, with bulging bags next to them. I opened a bag to find it full of succulent white mushrooms, some as large as the palm of one's hand, some the same size as eggs, but they all smelled heavenly. Quickly I returned to the pastures and harvested my own armful of fresh mushrooms.

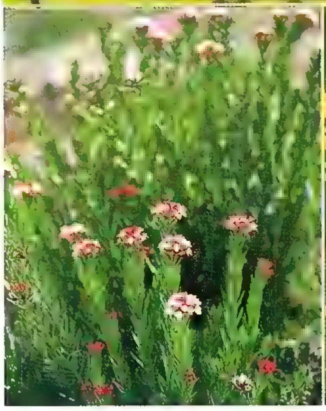
The boy led us to his family's tent. His grandfather was in his 70s and lay on the carpeted floor. The boy's two teenage sisters had just come back from herding sheep. When the old man saw guests had arrived and especially in the company of Ma, he asked the kids to make some tea and told Ma to slice the cooked lamb in the pot for the guests. It looked like that they treated Ma as part of the family.

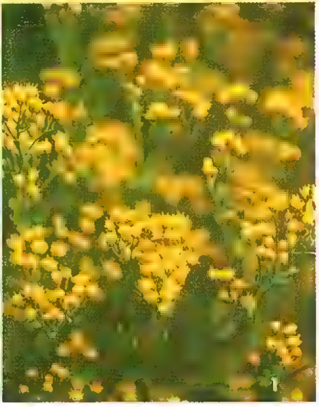
Boiling water went into the tea brick infusion, followed by fresh goats' milk and a pinch of salt. The fragrance greeted us even before the kids brought it in. For me, it was the first time I had tasted their milky tea, but the harmonious marriage of salt, milk and tea left an indelible impression. We chewed on deliciously tender lamb shanks, washed down by the delicious tea and accompanied by "baked shells" made of wheat meal. The "baked shells" are like giant steamed buns or large peony flowers in bloom.

A Fallen Empire

The old man sat up and we chatted. He told us that the Kecuo was not only a magical mountain made of "a man and a woman", but also the site of the summer palace for the ancient Tuyuhun Kingdom.







When we entered the mountain, a tall mound of earth near the Yingder farm was pointed out to us as the "royal sacrificial altar". In fact, "Yingder" means "altar" in Mongolian. Every summer, the king would bring the officials and concubines to Yingder for sacrificial rituals before heading into Small Kecuo for recreation, be it archery or riding. Rest and recreation took place in the quiet valleys of Great Kecuo and luxurious tents would be erected in the shelter of the cypresses. Everyone would enjoy the cool, and meals would be cooked next to the mountain streams. Great Kecuo's ancient cypresses are rarely seen now, and for thousands of years the locals saw them as tree gods and would never cut them down.

The old man continued to tell us the history of Tuyuhun Kingdom. Tuyuhun was the name of a leader in the Murong family of East Liaoning's Xianbei ethnic group over 1,700 years ago. He got into a dispute with his brothers over pasture ownership, and he led some 700 herders east to look for fertile land, but the horses kept taking them west. They crossed Yin Mountain and passed the Great Bend of the Yellow River before finding the perfect grassland in southern Qinghai. Years later, they established a kingdom and named it after the man who led them westwards: Tuyuhun is also known as the "horse-led kingdom".

Tuyuhun's capital was Dulan and it was far

removed from the threat of the central kingdoms. It thrived and flourished on this warm and safe land. At its peak, it was a large kingdom spanning 3000 mi east-west and 800 mi north-south, including Gansu, Sichuan and Qinghai provinces.

But the prosperous kingdom became complacent. Tibetan King led the Tufan army in attack all the way from Tibet during the Tang Dynasty (618-907). The Tuyuhun king Nuohebo beat a hasty retreat with his wife. He asked for help from the Tang emperor, who sent 100,000 solders to help Tuyuhun get back on its feet. But the entire area to the south of Qinghai Lake had been wiped out by the Tufan army. The 21-generation kingdom of Tuyuhun died out and became a subordinate country of Tufan. About two hundred years later, the entire kingdom had perished.

We bid the old man and kids farewell and returned to the township, where there were wide roads and shops plastered with advertisements of beautiful women. The modern scene was a surreal sight. Perhaps the mystery and exquisite timelessness of Great Kecuo had already taken our hearts captive.

Translated by Cheng Lei

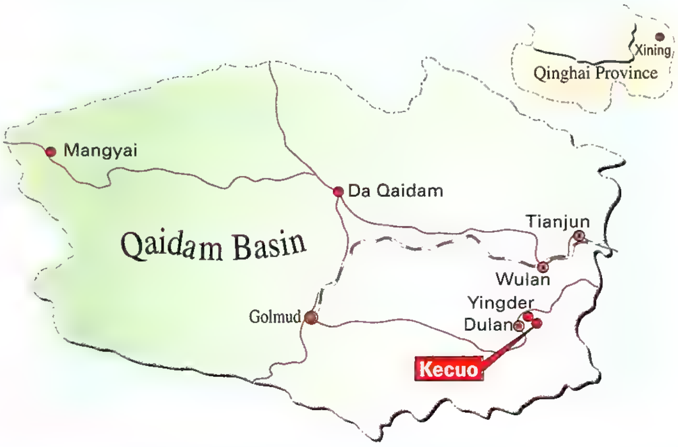
1. Wild flowers bloom in the valleys.
2. Succulent mushrooms growing wild on the prairie
3. Great Kecuo used to be the summer palace of the Tuguhun Kingdom, today it is a playground for the herders.

Travel Tips

Transport: To reach Dulan from Xining, take a coach to Dulan or to Golmud from the Xining Bus Terminal. In Dulan, ask at the county travel service for a guide and a jeep.

Accommodation: The Dulan County Reception Centre charges around 70 yuan (~US $9) for a standard room.

The best time to go is July to August. Mild weather means the mountains are green and flowers in bloom. Also, you'll pass Qinghai Lake and Chaka Salt Lake en-route. Drive further west and you'll get to Golmud. Tibet is to the south of Golmud, to the north, you can reach Dunhuang via Charhan Salt Lake.



O Pu'er Tea, Where Art Thou?

Photos by Shi Baoxiu   Article by Liu Jun

Most people believe that Pu'er tea originated from Pu'er County, Yunnan Province. In fact, it is just a beautiful mistake. Pu'er, actually, comes from the regions of Xishangbanna, Simao, and Lincang in Yunnan. The Pu'er County is, however, where the tea the gets gathered and sold.

Being the king of tea, the older the Pu'er tealeaves, the better the tea indeed. The taste of the tea is all dependent on the fermentation, pressing and drying processes handled by the tea masters.

Being fond of tea, I roamed around the streets of Hongshi in Xishangbanna. Spotting a decent shop, I went straight in.

And it was an eye-opening visit. I used to think that tea came in jars or sealed in bags. However, it turned out it comes in rectangular, cylindrical, spherical and even gourd shapes. The tea packed in cylinders looked like the "royal family" of tea. I asked the owner how much it cost. "406 yuan for half kg, not a penny less." I wondered where the tea was from, since it was astronomically expensive.

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"Could you cut down the price a little bit?"

"No, it is authentic Pu'er. You can't get it any cheaper."

"I thought Pu'er came from Pu'er County. Is this fake?" The shop-owner got very angry, and turned his back to ignore me completely.

Having heard of my experience, my friends from Xishangbanna couldn't help laughing, amid some sympathy. They explained to me that it was actually in Xishangbanna where Pu'er was grown. "It's an irrefutable fact. If you don't believe me, come and take a look." I had found myself a laughing stock in the homeland of tea. So I decided on a visit to the cradle of Pu'er tea.

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A Painful Path to the Home of Tea

At daybreak, we took off from Menglun heading for Yibang Street, the hometown of tea. We arrived at Xiangming, and at lunch, we met a bald headed new friend called Guo Conglin. Having learnt that we were going to Yibang Street, he looked at the car we had rented with suspicion and then shook his head. "This car won't get you there, you'd better hire a jeep." So the five of us, together with Conglin, were squeezed inside a tiny and derelict jeep.

The road was in bad condition and a lot of it was grown over by wild plants. The jeep was definitely not coping well and grumbled all the way. After some tossing and rocking, I found my fingers sinking right into the spongy seats because I was holding on so tight. My neck was totally stiff and my body was sore all over.

We reached Yibang Street at dusk. At its zenith, Yibang was a very prosperous and exciting place, visited by merchants and caravans from all over, and home to over 100,000 people. But now as the sun reclined on the smooth granite road, a feeling of utter desolation was apparent.

Once-glorious Yibang Street

Yibang Street is now nothing more than a street.

History has cleansed its glamour. The ancient hometown of tea left behind only a scarred yet calm facade. Promenading on the stony path were pigs, dogs, and chickens. The granite stones were flat and smooth, but also scarred with a painful past. The stones were originally selected with care for inscriptions and making tablets. Now, they are used for house foundations and footstools.

During the Qing Dynasty (1616-1911) Yibang produced no rice, but excellent tea, which was a profitable crop. Blocked by rivers and locked by mountains, the tea was transported by caravans along ancient paths, along with sugar and salt, to other parts of China. Horses and leather was also transported, and the path became known as the "Ancient Path of Tea and Horses".

1. Once lined with tea shops, Yibang is deserted now due to the changed road system.
2. An old tea forest of over 300 years old
3. The enormous trunk of an ancient tea tree
4. Pu'er was used as a tribute to the royalty in the Qing Dynasty.
5. Drying the "Seven Sons Tea"
6. Tea farmers of Lagu ethnic minority group harvesting spring tea

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雲南
易武順時興
春茶尖

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In recent years, there has been heated debate about the origin of Pu'er. The consensus is that Pu'er was named after its collecting and marketing region, Pu'er. Pu'er refers to the tea grown and processed by traditional methods in regions neighboring Pu'er County. Geographically, Simao, Xishangbanna and Lincang are said to be the three original production regions of Pu'er—also the starting point of the ancient path.

Ancient Tea Trees in the Indigenous Forest

On our way back from Yibang, we stopped for a break, going into a house on the side of the road.

The owner was extremely hospitable. We were given a freshly brewed cup of fragrant tea, and learnt that we were in Bazongzhai. The owner, Quan Cun'an, ran a family tea business, which named "Quan's Tea Farm". Surrounded by a strong tea aroma, Quan told us the story of tea.

The old Quan family had been running the business for generations. Old Quan had worked in the village all his life. But, three years ago, after he retired, he went to Yiwu and Yibang to learn the skills of making Pu'er tea from different masters. His two sons, on the other hand, were busy marketing their tea around the country, such as in Guangdong, Guangxi, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and even Korea.

The processed tealeaves, known as "Tea Biscuit", is kept in the attic for a few years before sale. Tea is like spirits: the longer you keep it, the darker it becomes, and the better it tastes. This is the charm of Pu'er tea.

Bazongzhai is part of one of the six major tea-producing mountains, namely the Manzhuang Tea Mountain. Old Quan took us there himself to take a look at how tea trees are grown.

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Walking on the enormous tea mountain, I felt embraced in green. The chirping of the birds and the flourishing plants struck a perfect harmony. Off we went to see the ancient tea trees, only to find they were spread all over the indigenous forest. There was no fear of pests, since nature provided natural protection, and no need for fertilizer, as nature was full of rich nutrients. Every dawn and dusk was showered with dew and mist as well as beams from the sun and moon—the essence of heaven and earth. In an era when fertilizers and pesticides are heavily abused, these pure natural resources are rare.

The ancient tea trees are not the little shrubs we see on TV, but big trees. The rugged trunks tell of a life not so simple and easy. The trees dangled with green fruit—something I had not seen before. Old Quan chuckled, "Bite on it and you will taste tea!"

"Really?" I wondered, taking a doubtful bite. A fresh aroma of tea seeped into my mouth as a light liquid. It was really tea!

Old Quan said, "There's a guy called Zhang Yi, and who knows much more about tea than I."

Making "Tea Biscuit"

Yiwu was a little town, so tiny that walking from one end to the other took a few minutes. Walking along the stony path we soon reached Zhang Yi's home and workshop. All these years, scholars and tourists have been coming to Zhang's home. Without any sense of impatience, he explained things in great detail. If they wanted to make tea, Zhang wouldn't keep anything from them, and would tell all he knew. Tea-making methods had been kept secret in the past. "If I don't pass this skill to others, it will be lost."

Knowing that we came to learn how to process tealeaves, he accepted us with pleasure.

Stepping into the workshop and glimpsing the crisp tealeaves, I wondered how they became a "tea biscuit". The master told us that the dried Qingmao tea (the natural ingredient of Pu'er) had to be weighed first, and put into a copper bucket. Then, the bucket had to be placed in a special pot for steaming. After a few minutes, the tealeaves are softened, then put into a cotton bag and sealed. The bag is then flattened and put on the table and pressed further on a special stone. Finally, the tea is dried in the sun. The tea biscuit made in this process is called "Qing (Fresh) Biscuit". "Shou (Well-done) Biscuit", on the other hand, requires a more complicated process.

1. Today's tea farmers still stick to their traditional practice.
2. Tools for pressing tea
3. Family-size tea storage
4. Packaging is the final step in processing.
5. Drying the Qingmao tea
6. When pressing the tea, it's important that strength is evenly distributed.

Pu’er for the Kings and Nobles

Making tea not only takes skill, but also strength. In the tea estate, there were stone chains, like dumbbells, used by the ancient tea-makers for building up their strength. A person who lacks power cannot press tea biscuits that are even in thickness, density and shape. While we were learning to make tea, Old Zhang kept talking. “Pu'er is famous for its high-quality. Over 170 years in Qing Dynasty, Pu'er was used as a tribute to the rulers. During the period of 1796-1821, the annual production was about five million kilograms. The mandarins of the Qing Dynasty measured their prestige and status according to their Pu'er assets. They gave Pu'er as valuable gifts to foreign diplomats and special guests. As such, Pu'er earned its fame overseas.”

Zhang Yi's “Seven Sons Tea” is gentle, fragrant, deep, and smooth. Yet, why does Pu'er taste so different in different places, despite all being called Pu'er? The secret lies in how the ingredients are processed. Like the Quan family in Bazongzhai, Zhang Yi's Shunshixing Tea Farm produced its “Seven Sons Tea” from the tealeaves of the old tea forest. In February 2003, Zhang Yi sent tea to Simao Health Bureau for inspection. The examination showed that their tea contained no fertilizers or pesticides. And the amount of lead and copper was much lower than international benchmarks.

As Pu'er becomes more popular, merchants from Taiwan, Japan and Korea have been taking more notice of Yiwu. The price of tea here is always rising.

Moldy-tasting Tea?

Xishangbanna is very humid, and the unique taste of Pu'er can only be created in such climatic conditions. Ignorant of this special aged fragrance, some people are fooled into thinking the tea is just moldy.

The second floor of Zhang's house was used for storage, where tea older than three years was kept. We couldn't help opening our wallets to buy some. Expensive it may be, but Pu'er has always been a luxury for the nobility. Enveloped in the mist of tea fragrance, we imagined ourselves as princes and nobles, sipping the aura of history through the delicate antique tea cups.

Translated by Dora Tsang

Travel Tips

Suggested Route:

Day One: Start from Menglun and drive 77 km to Manzhuang Village Office, Bazongzhai, to Quan's Tea Farm. Quan Cun'an, the owner, is the offspring of tea masters. In another 8 km, you will reach Xiangming Township office, then a further 35 km to Yibang Street. Find accommodation in a local household.

Day two: Find a local guide for a half-day tour of Yibang Street. Try the derelict ancient path for a unique experience. In the afternoon, return by the same route to Xiangming, and turn towards Yiwu. After driving about 5 km, you will reach Yiwu in the early evening. Spend the night in a local guesthouse.

Day three: Spend the morning in Yiwu Old Street, behind Yiwu Central Primary School. In the afternoon, visit Mr. Zhang Yi and learn how to make “Seven Sons Tea” in his tea shop.

Climate:

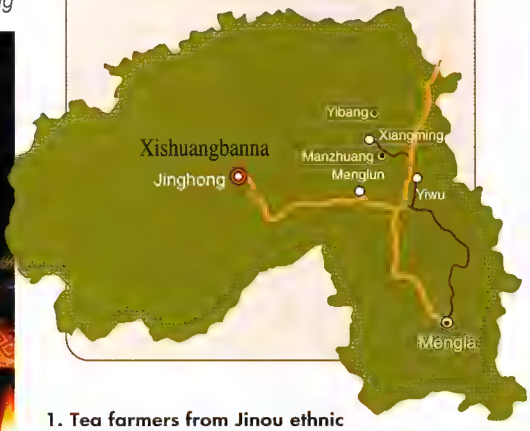
Yiwu and Xiangming are 1100m-plus above sea-level. The weather is dry and pleasant, between 18 and 22°C.

Transportation:

The hill paths in the regions around Xiangming and Yiwu are bumpy and rugged, so jeeps are required.

Accommodation:

Xiangming and Yiwu are little towns where you can find private guesthouses. A room costs around 10-50 yuan (~US $1-6). There is no guesthouse in Yibang Street, but the hospitable locals will offer you accommodation. Just pay a suitable fee according to circumstances.



1. Tea farmers from Jinou ethnic minority group collecting tealeaves
2. Hani ethnic minority earthen-pot tea

CHINA TOURISM
THE HOME OF PU'ER TEA
THE THREE DIMENSIONAL VOYAGE IN DATONG
THE TRANSFORMED
YANGTZE
THREE GORGES
288

Readership Survey

China Tourism always appreciates feedback from its readers. In accordance with your suggestions, we have recently added a variety of new columns. Still, we need to know more of your opinions, including criticisms and suggestions. Please take a couple of minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to us. Thank you!

Please give your evaluation of the stories in this issue and your overall impression of *China Tourism*.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
The Dwindling of the Yangtze Three Gorges	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Lost Summer Palace: Tuguhun	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
O Pu'er Tea, Where Art Thou?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Three Dimensional Voyage in Datong	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Living in the Land of the Pharaohs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Others:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Photographs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cover	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Articles	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Travel Tips	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Art Design	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other Opinions: ____

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Name: (Mr./Ms./Mrs.) ____
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Age: ______________ Occupation: ______________ Number of trips to China in the last 5 years: ______________

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☐ Hotel Name: ______________________ ☐ Others ______________________

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☐ Tourist Trade purposes ☐ Others ______________________

What do you like most about *China Tourism*?

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Are you happy with the factual content of *China Tourism*? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What are your suggestions for improvement?

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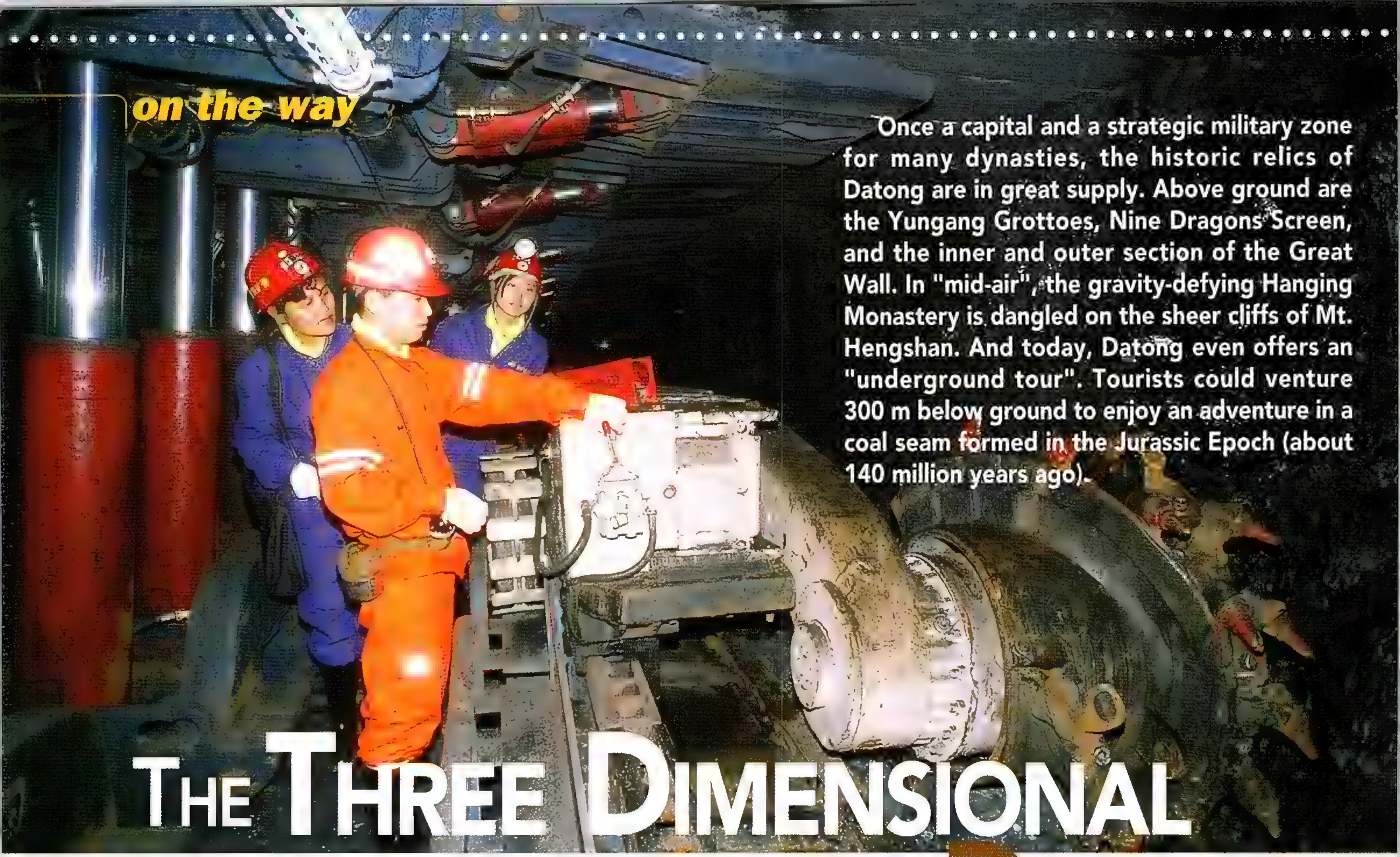
Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. It provides us with invaluable feedback which will help us improve *China Tourism* magazine for you.

*Please mail this questionnaire to our office at 24/F, Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong, or fax to (852) 2561 8196.



Once a capital and a strategic military zone for many dynasties, the historic relics of Datong are in great supply. Above ground are the Yungang Grottoes, Nine Dragons Screen, and the inner and outer section of the Great Wall. In "mid-air", the gravity-defying Hanging Monastery is dangled on the sheer cliffs of Mt. Hengshan. And today, Datong even offers an "underground tour". Tourists could venture 300 m below ground to enjoy an adventure in a coal seam formed in the Jurassic Epoch (about 140 million years ago).

THE THREE DIMENSIONAL VOYAGE IN DATONG

Photos & Article by Li Youxiang

Datong Coal Mine Adventure

Shanxi Datong has been dubbed the cradle of coal. It always tops the nation in its reserves, output, and export capacity. Every couple of minutes, a special train carrying coal pulls out from over 20 large-scale modern coal mines here. Through Jing-Bao, Tong-Pu, and Da-Qin railways, the trains transport the coal to hundreds of cities and 5000-odd enterprises nationwide. Some coal even reaches as far as the coastal cities and foreign countries.

A Little Coal Mine Town

Not far from Yungang Grottoes is a large ancient-style door. Passing through it, you can find Jinhuagong coal mine, right in front of the bridge across the river.

Words like "dark, filthy, messy and terrible" would probably pop up when talking about coal mines. But despite my expectations, the coal mine area is neatly covered with houses block by block, like a little town. When entering the mining area by car, all I saw on both sides of the driveway were offices, miners' dormitories, houses, food courts, shops, hospital, and schools, green trees, water fountains and statues.

The highest building in the area is the "coal-washing" building, with its facade in blue and white stripes. It is considered the landmark of the mine. Coal extracted underground is sent to this building for refining, "coal-washing", right away. Afterwards, with the help of heavy machines and gigantic scales, coal is dumped into the train compartments like mud. A train of 150 compartments can carry about 60 tn of coal. The automatic loading process usually only takes about half an hour.

A Miner in Disguise

When I arrived at the reception office, two guides welcomed me. One of the guides was Song, who had been working in the field for less than three months. He greeted us in heavily accented Mandarin and gave us a presentation about the coal mine. He covered all sorts of things: from the development of the mine to the two visits of the Chinese President, from the history of Datong's extraction to things to watch out for when touring underground. From his enthusiasm, I could tell that he was passionate about the job.

Another guide was Guo, a 20-something young man, who started working there right after finishing university. He said that most visitors to Datong wanted to

2

see the historic relics, and the trip to the coalmine was like a side dish.

The two guides then took us to get changed. Even though this was a daily routine for miners before going underground, it was a brand new experience to us. We donned blue uniforms and rubber boots that insulated against 6000-V electric shocks. We fastened the electric batteries to our waists and a lamp on our helmets. Finally, we wrapped our necks with a white towel and truly felt like miners. The two guides, however, were dressed in red—so that we could spot them easily in the mine.

300 m below Ground

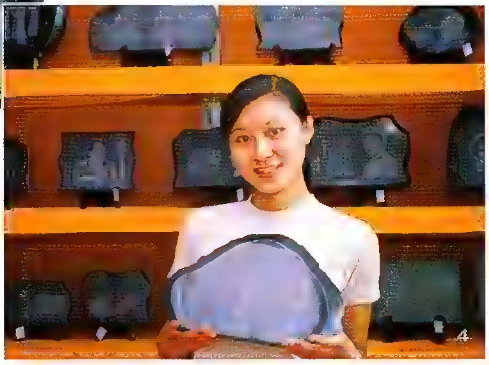
The two "red guides", one in front and the other at the back, took us to the elevator of the shaft. Miners normally used this elevator as well. Guo told us Jinhuagong mine was about 40 km^2, and the coal extracted now was from the Jurassic Epoch, about 140 million years ago. The mine had more than 20 layers. The mine we went was in the 12th layer, about 300 m underground.

The German-made elevator could take up to 30 people at a time. When going down, there was complete silence. The three-minute ride took us to the depths of the mine and we could not help feeling a little perturbed. Stepping out of the elevator, we looked around only to see dark layers of coal, glimmering slightly. We were at the entrance of a main path, where we got in little carts, rolling slowly on the rails. We proceeded in darkness for 2500 m, and came to another intersection. The path divided into two: one heading towards a shaft where extraction was in progress; another was a shaft especially for visitors. The sign at the path entrance said "Mysterious Zone". And there was a sightseeing plan, just like we were in a labyrinth.

The Coal Mine Museum

The "Mysterious Zone" was in fact a worked-out shaft, three metres high, six metres wide and more than 1000 m long. Six scenic work sites had been provided, based on the history of coal extraction, from indigenous extraction methods, explosive extraction, to an integrated method. At each scenic site stood a box with written explanations and diagrams. This was virtually a coal extraction museum.

Taking a turn at a shallow alley, we reached the indigenous mining area, where a method originated in the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC - 25 AD) had been used. It was an agonizing history of mining. Miners were treated like animals without any safety measures, and the death rate was extremely high.



The method of explosive extraction started in the 1960s. Mechanical ventilation is adopted and pine timber is used for pillars. Mass extraction, advanced mass extraction and integrated extraction are the more modern methods, in which transportation lines and coal extraction machines are used. The safety measures have also been greatly enhanced.

In the 1980s, the most advanced integrated extraction was adopted. An integrated extraction control centre was set up on the ground, which used electronic devices to supervise the whole production process in the shaft. By pressing a few buttons, workers can control some extremely powerful extraction machines, cutting coal like slicing through a piece of cake.

Translated by Dora Tsang

1. A coal extraction machine displays the latest extracting technology.
2. The first time I ever dressed like a miner.
3. Using a drill to get a taste of what it's like extracting coal.
4. Arts and crafts made from coal are quite rare.

Travel Tips

- **Getting there:** Take a Number 4 public bus from Datong train station. Change to a Number 3 bus to Jinhuagong mine or Yungang grottoes. The ride costs three yuan.* In the long-distance bus terminal, you can take small vans that go past Jinhuagong mine or Yungang grottoes. The ride also costs three yuan.
- **Tour options**
  Route A: Go down the shaft, and start the journey from the indigenous extraction zone to other zones of modern extraction methods. Finally, visit the art and craft factory.
  Route B: Visit the extraction control centre above ground, and observe the whole coal cleaning and selection process, and then visit the art and craft factory.
- **Details of tour:** **Duration:** 2.5 hours
  Cost: Route A, 100 yuan per person, Route B, 80 yuan per person
  Meal: ~20 yuan
- **Tour agent telephone number:** (0352) 708 6666

* US$1 ~ 8 yuan

LIVING IN THE LAND OF THE PHARAOHS

Photos and Article by Xiao Ji

Nowadays, hotels have to offer more than just a comfortable environment and convenient location — they need special features to stand out among the competition. The new Landmark hotel in Macao, not yet a year old, offers all three, making it a popular destination.

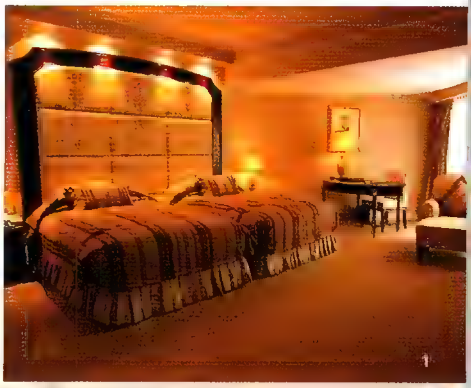
Located in the Landmark Plaza on the Avenida da Amizade, the hotel has maintained a rather low profile. But still, it has become well known for its ancient Egyptian-style luxury casino. And I was very happy to try it out.

SPACIOUS DELUXE ROOM

A warm glow lit my suite when I opened the door to a spacious room furnished in harmonious hues of European walnut and brocade. I found the mini bar well stocked and the bathroom luxurious. But a pleasant surprise awaited in the form of connecting doors between my room and the adjacent one, where the hotel put my friend.

There are 451 guestrooms and suites in the hotel, all known for their roominess. Room features include mini bar, TV, temperature control, personal safes, broadband Internet and e-mail access.

The hotel has three presidential suites in British, French and Italian styles, and they are decorated with valuable art and walls that are hand



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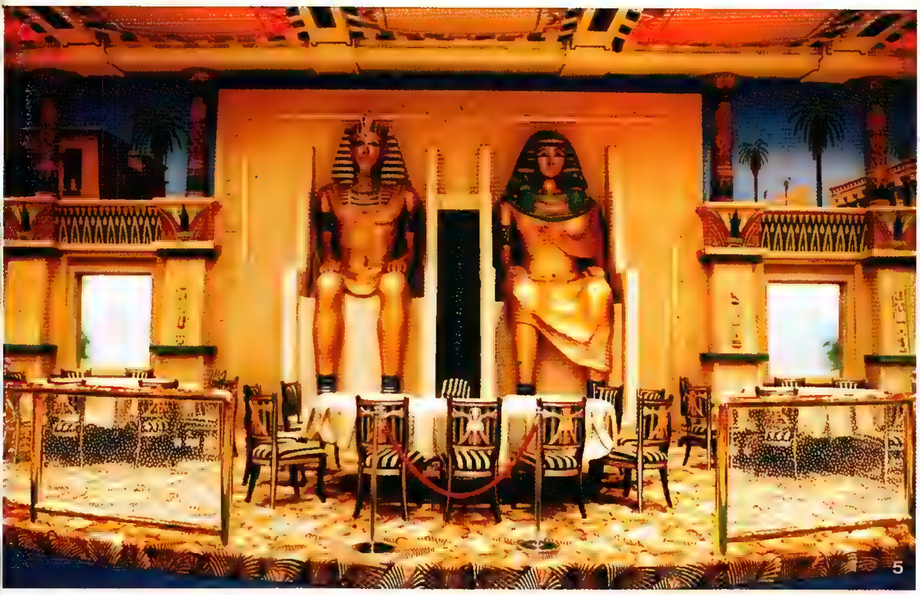
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painted by Australian designers.

EGYPTIAN CASINO

A golden world of huge glittering Egyptian and desert scenes covered in ancient hieroglyphics greeted us as we stepped onto the third floor where Macao's first theme casino is located.

The Pharaoh's Palace Casino, designed by Australian designers, is spread over an area of 80,000 ft^2 and cost approximately US $7 million dollars to build. The casino has 60 gaming tables, offering games such as baccarat, blackjack, roulette, Chinese dice game (big and small) and slot machines. Any Macao residents or tourists who meet the casino's rules can try out their luck here. As the casino adopts a "semi-membership" system, guests have to undergo tight security checks before issuing a temporary guest ID. This helps to make the casino much safer than other entertainment venues. Hungry guests do not have to go far, because close to the casino is the King of Kings Restaurant, also decorated in ancient Egyptian style. In addition, the casino has super luxurious VIP rooms, decorated in different styles, and equipped with bars, restaurants, individual bathrooms, lounges and massage rooms.

FROM DESERT TO WATERHOLES

It was a nice surprise to find the hotel's karaoke and lounge in the basement a match for the impressive casino. Aptly named "The Cave", the lounge is a very different world. It is fitted out like a deep primitive cave with rocky walls, flickering firelights and seats in animal prints. It is a 3000-ft^2 cave with a live band performance every night. The karaoke has six rooms in different themes such as "Lost City", "Jurassic Period", "Zebra" and "Swamp". The two largest karaoke rooms cover over 1000 ft^2 and have facilities such as dual projection system and a 61" LCD TV. With a capacity up to 50 people, there is enough room for everyone. What's more, the hotel's restaurants will provide catering services that make the rooms ideal venues parties of all sizes.

Emerging from "The Cave", we immediately dived into another: the indoor Roman style swimming pool. It is always kept at around 28°C and fitted out with two Jacuzzis. After that, we had a massage and checked out the driving range. To round off the day, we had dinner at the Royal Orchid Chinese Restaurant on the first floor.

Translated by Megina Chan

1. **Deluxe room**
2. **24-hr Pharaoh's Palace Casino**
3. **Indoor swimming pool**
4. **"The Cave"**
5. **The luxurious land of the Pharaohs**

The Landmark, Macao

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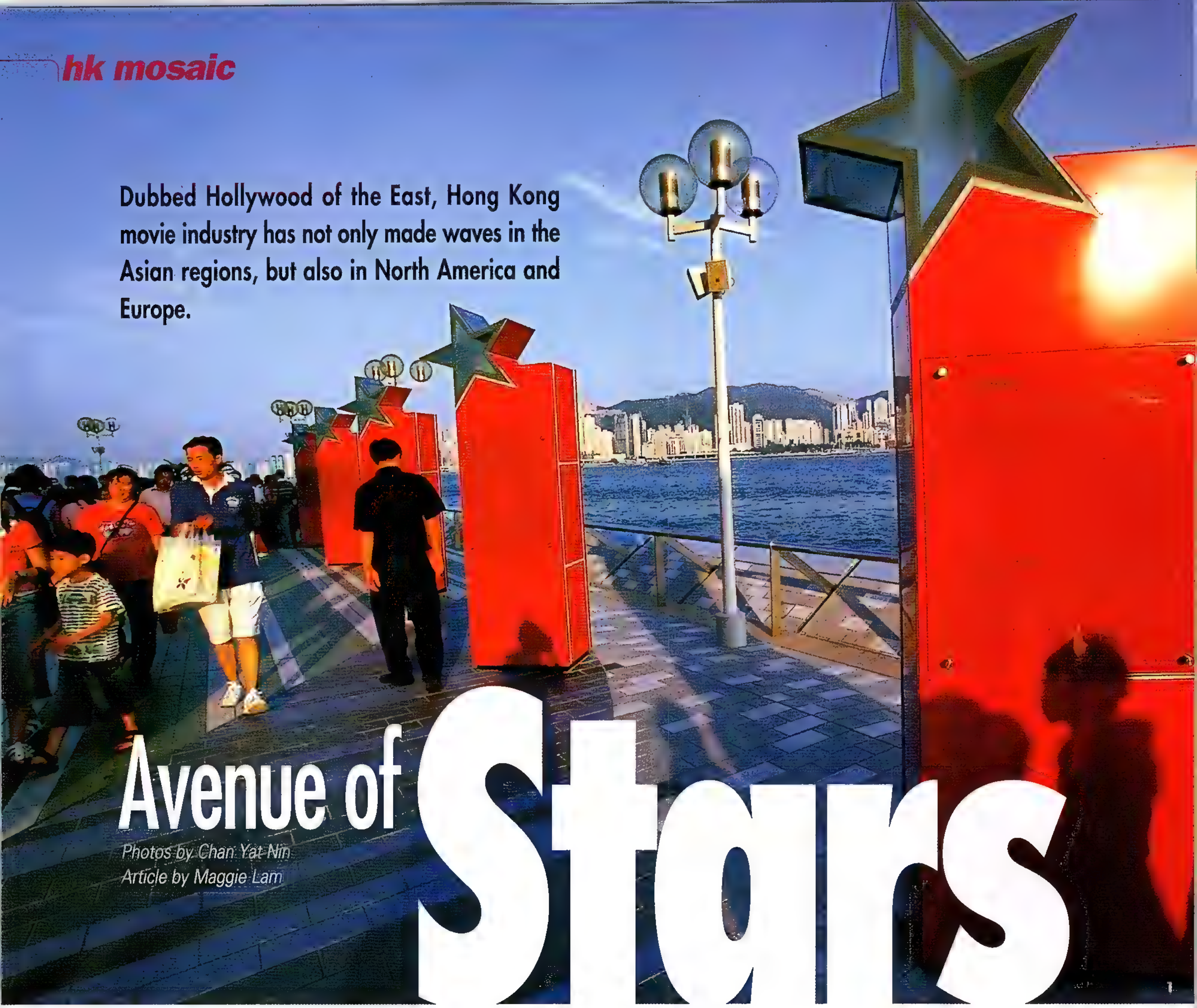


Dubbed Hollywood of the East, Hong Kong movie industry has not only made waves in the Asian regions, but also in North America and Europe.

Avenue of Stars

Photos by Chan Yat Nin
Article by Maggie Lam

Many wonder how a tiny island with a mere hundred-year film history can accomplish so much. Here, the Avenue of Stars at Tsim Sha Tsui waterfront reveals the secret of breeding Hollywood blockbuster director, superstars who drive the whole world wild with the new flare of Kung Fu chic, as well as Cannes Film Festival award-winning actor, actress, and film producer.

Asian Movie Powerhouse

Inspired by the Walk of Fame of Hollywood, Hong Kong showed off its star power at the new tourist attraction in April. The Avenue of Stars has commemorative plaques that honour over 70 all-time-flavourite superstars and filmmakers. Since the works produced here have been so well received across the Asian regions, they are available in languages such as Mandarin, Vietnamese, Malaysian, Thai, Korean, etc.

Strolling down the path, one can relive the bygone silver-screen moments of the 20th century.

Star Power

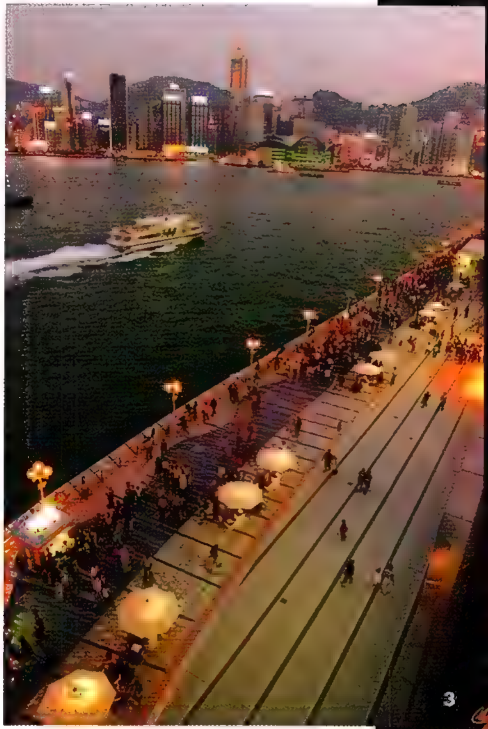
Over the years, many gifted local stars have successful broken the cultural barrier and hit it big on the international stage. Bruce Lee was the first one to break the ice and became the world's kung-fu icon. Jackie Chan picked up where Bruce's left off and has long jump-kicked his ways to the

Hollywood along with his comedic performance, winning the hearts of millions in his movies such as Rush Hour and Shanghai Noon. Last but not least, the five-time Chinese Martial Arts National Champion Jet Li is also one of the most worshipped Hollywood stars.

As for heroine, Michelle Yeoh successfully broke the stereotype of helpless Bond girls, for she played an intelligent spy who actually saved James Bond (played by Pierce Bonsnan) with her superior martial art skills.

Needless to say, Kung Fu heroes are not the only stars who can make it to the top. Drama queen Maggie Cheung took Cannes Film Festival by storm with her captivating performance in the French movie Clean. She won this year's best actress trophy, after snatching the Best Actress award at Silver Berlin Bear several years ago. In addition, Maggie's long-time partner on screen, Tony Leung, was already awarded the Best Actor at the Cannes Film Festival three years ago.

When it comes to behind-the-stage producers, the local talents are just as successful. On one side of the globe, there is the eminent Hollywood director John Woo, who works closely with mega-celebrities like Tom Cruise and Nicolas Cage; and on the other, Wong Kar-wai, who is already a regular at the Cannes Film Festival, becomes the household name in Europe after winning the prestigious Cesar Award.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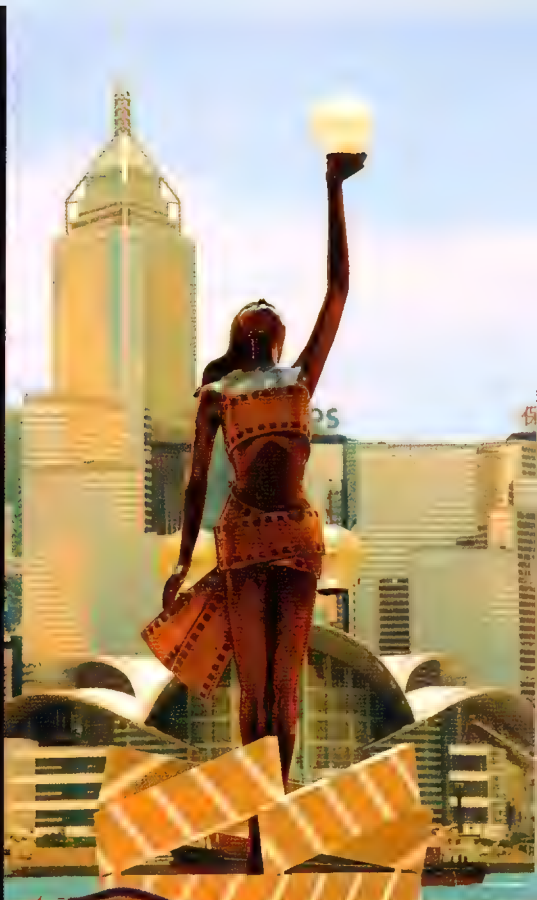
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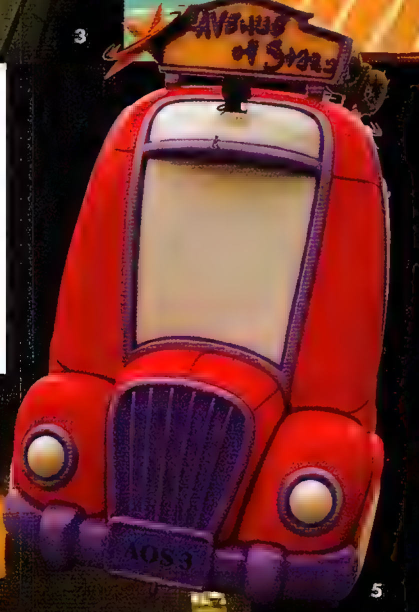

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1. Each star column here marks a decade of journey in the Hong Kong film industry.
2. Guess who made these handprints? (by Maggie Lam)
3. The dazzling downtown evening skyline
4. The sculpture of Hong Kong Film Awards
5. The lighter side of movie business (by Maggie Lam)
6. Tsim Sha Tsui waterfront beside the gorgeous Victoria Harbour is one of the most popular dating places.

Bruce Lee

Known as the greatest martial arts actor of the 20th century, Bruce took the traditional martial arts film to a new level. A true master, Lee studied Karate, Judo, Jiu Jitsu, and Wing Chun. What's more, he created his own streamlined and practical martial art, namely the Jun Fan (a Kung Fu style) and Jeet Kune Do. Bruce Lee has become the international iconic figure as an invincibility combatant.

Jackie Chan

Celebrated for his comic fighting style, Jackie Chan has made over a hundred movies and become the household names in Kung Fu movies worldwide. Chan successfully broke into the American movie industry, starring in films such as Shanghai Noon, Tuxedo and Rush Hour.

Selected Filmography

The Medallion (2003), Shanghai Knights (2003), The Tuxedo (2002) Rush Hour 2 (2001), The Accidental Spy (2001), Shanghai Noon (2000), Rush Hour (1998), Rumble in the Bronx (1996), Drunken Fist II (1994), Police Story (1986), Bruce vs Snake in Eagle's Shadow (1978), Eagle Shadow Fist (1973)

Jet Li

After winning the Chinese Martial Arts National Championship five times, Li has become an international martial arts star appearing in movies such as Lethal Weapon 4, Romeo Must Die, Kiss of the dragon, and Cradle 2 the Grave.

John Woo

Originally a famous director in Hong Kong, Woo started to make films in Hollywood in the 1990s. He directed blockbusters such as Face Off and Mission: Impossible II.

Selected Filmography

Paycheck (2003), Windtalkers (2001), Mission: Impossible II (2000) Face Off (1997), Broken Arrow (1996), A Better Tomorrow (1986)

Michelle Yeoh

A Malaysian Chinese, Yeoh has no formal martial arts training but compensates by her former dance training. She did many of her own stunts, and has known for her roles in action and martial arts movies. She was one of the Bond girls in Tomorrow Never Dies (1997) and also starred in the Oscar-winning movie Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000).

Selected Filmography

The Touch (2002), Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000), Moonlight Express (1999), Tomorrow Never Dies (1997), The Soong Sisters (1997), The Stunt Woman (1996), Wing Chun (1994)

Maggie Cheung

Probably won more awards than any other Hong Kong actress, Maggie remains popular after making over 70 films since the 80s.

Awards

Best Actress of Cannes Film Festival for Clean (2004)
Best Actress of Silver Berlin Bear for Center Stage (1992)
Best Actress of Hong Kong Film Award for In the Mood for Love (2001)
Best Actress of Hong Kong Film Award for The Soong Sisters (1998)
Best Actress of Hong Kong Film Award for Comrades, Almost a Love Story (1996)
Best Actress of Hong Kong Film Award for Center Stage (1993)
Best Actress of Hong Kong Film Award for Farewell China (1991)
Best Actress of Hong Kong Film Award for A Fishy Story (1989)
Best Actress of HKFCS Award for Comrades, Almost a Love Story (1996)

Look, Mom! My hands are alm
as big as Jackie Chan!
(by Maggie Lam)

Bruce Lee

Jackie Chan

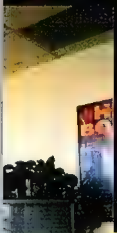
Jet Li

John Woo

Michelle Yeoh

Wong Kar Wai

So this is how it feels to be on film.... (by Maggie Lam)



Maggie Cheung

Chow Yun Fat

Stars' photos courtesy of Ta Kung Pao

Chow Yun Fat

Chow is another local star who went to Hollywood to advance his career. He made films such as Replacement Killers (1998), The Corruptor (1999), Anna and the King (1999), Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000), and Bulletproof Monk (2003).

Selected Filmography

Bulletproof Monk (2003), Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000),
Anna and the King (1999), The Corruptor (1999), Replacement Killers (1998),
The Killer (1989), A Better Tomorrow (1986)

Wong Kar Wai

Wong Kar Wai has directed many feature films and won numerous awards, including the best foreign film at 2001 Cesar Award and the best director's prize at the 1997 Cannes Film Festival for Happy Together.

Selected Filmography

2046 (2004), In the Mood for Love (2000), Happy Together (1997),
Fallen Angels (1995), Ashes of Time (1994), As Tears Go by (1988)

Awards

Best Foreign Film, 2001 Cesar Award
Best Director, 1997 Cannes Film Festival
Screen International Award, 2000 European Film Awards

A small shop on the waterfront that makes wax model of your hand.

Travel Tip

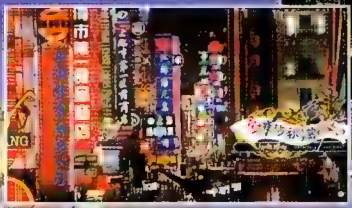
Tsim Sha Tsui waterfront is the best place to enjoy the multimedia light-and-sound show, namely the Symphony of Lights, which spotlights the skyline every night. And aside from the stunning view, there are enough malls here that keep every shopaholic happy. Among all the shopping and entertainment centres in Hong Kong, the largest one is the Harbour City (where is just a few blocks away) with its over 700 shops and restaurants offering local and international brands.

How to get there: Since Hong Kong is small and crowded, public transport is the only practical way to get around. The bus system is cheap and extensive, but the best way to get here is to hop on the ultra-modern Mass Transit Railway (MTR). Simply get off at the Tsim Sha Tsui station and follow the road signs, all the major attractions, such as Harbour City, Art Museum, Space Museum, or Cultural Centre, are within 15 min of walking distance.

BEST SELLE

SHANGHAI
上海游

Shanghai has evolved at an unprecedented speed for decades into the biggest commercial city in China and one of the great metropolises of the world. Favourably located at the mouth of the Yangtse River, Shanghai has a long history and a rich culture. Commercial tower blocks and traditional buildings exude their individual charms simultaneously in the Pudong District, where hundreds of buildings in different styles, old or new, are collectively known as the Exposition of World Architecture. A kaleidoscope of entertainments and festivals of Old Shanghai attracts scores of entrepreneurs and travellers alike. "Touring in Shanghai" takes you deeper into this vibrant city through spectacular photography, along with outlines for more than 10 different kinds of tours including a shopping tour, popular tourist sights, cultural excursions, and more. Practical information summarises accommodations, transport and dining options, and tourist maps are also included. "Touring in Shanghai" is the latest, most comprehensive travel pictorial of Shanghai available in Hong Kong.



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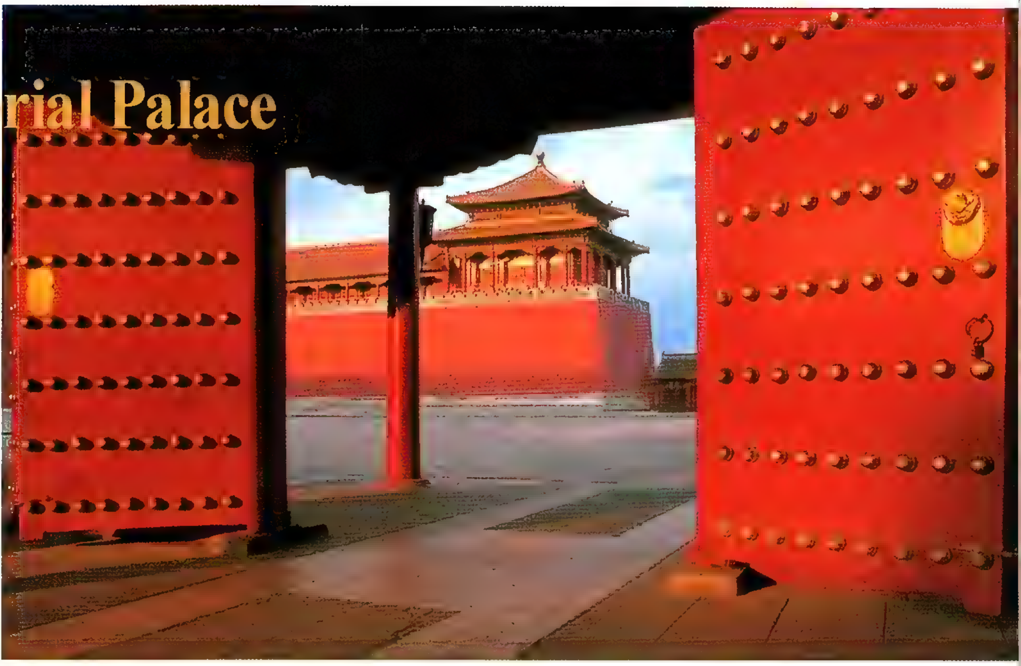
HIGHLIGHTS OF ISSUE No. 289

Feature Story:

The Invisible Imperial Palace

The Forbidden City in Beijing is the world's largest palace and the only well-preserved palace left in China. Situated right in the centre of Beijing city, it reveals a glamorous part of the cultural heritage of China. The whole palace was neatly planned and meticulously built, striking people with a grand atmosphere. It covers a total area of 720,000 m^2, and it has nearly a hundred courts as well as over 9,000 houses. Visitors can easily lost in the labyrinth of the palace beyond high walls.....



Discoveries: The Hardship of Cotton Picking

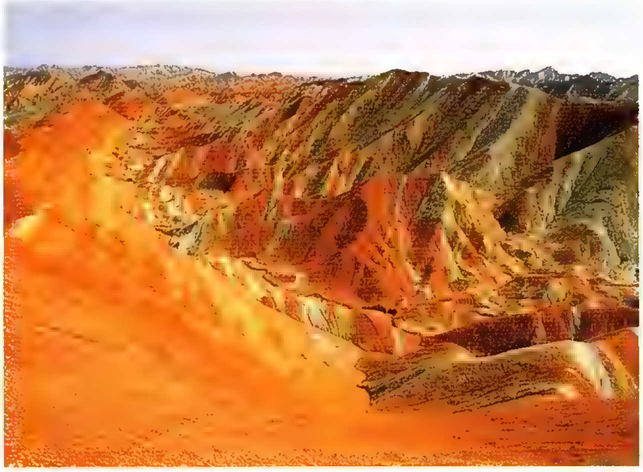
In order to make a living, hundreds of thousands of women from Xinjiang's (northwest border area of China) neighbouring provinces would leave their home in the last ten days of August to pick cotton in Xinjiang. Several thousand kilometres away from their family, these women spend days and nights bending over at the vast cotton field for three months....

Traveller's Corner:

Ninu on Foot – A Journey into the Mountains

I first heard about Ninu about eight years ago from a Tibetan friend, and he sparked my interest to make a visit.

Located in the valleys adjacent to Yunnan's dividing range and Daocheng of Sichuan Province, Ninu covers valley troughs at 2,400 m elevation to mountains over 4,000 m. This Tibetan village buried deep in the mountains; it is not accessible by road, and one can only enter on horseback or on foot.



Photography:

Fantastic Sight of Danxia Landform

Last autumn, I made a special trip to the Nanqun Danxia region situated on both sides of the Zhangye-Sunan Highway. With an elevation of 2,000 - 3,800 m, it is 40 km from Zhangye City. I was riding past the highland northeast of the Liyuan river mouth when suddenly I found an extremely gorgeous valley in a distant place to my southeast. Unfold before my eyes was the most exquisite part of the Nanqun Danxia landform — it is the combination of precipices, peaks and stone pillars of the Danxia Mountain in Guangdong Province and the multicoloured Yardang landform in Xinjiang....

BITS AND PIECES ABOUT THE YANGTZE RIVER

The Yangtze River is the largest river in China. It starts with the Tuotuo River at the Roof of the World — Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, takes in numerous rivers, and flows eastward across the interior of China. With an overall length of more than 6,300 km, it marches toward the East China Sea. The Yangtze River, next only to the Amazon and the Nile, is the third biggest river in the world. Most importantly, it is the cradle that breeds the ancient civilisation of the Chinese nation.

THE THREE GORGES DAM PROJECT

Where is it: Sandouping of Yichang, Hubei province

How much is it: 204 billion yuan (~US $25 billion)

How many migrants involved: ~1 million

How tall is it: 181 m

Installed power generation capacity: 18 million kw

What does it do: Generating power generation, controlling flood, and improving navigation

Details of the project:

1993-1997 — The Yangtze River was diverted.

1998-2003 — The first batch of generators began to generate power and a permanent ship lock was opened for navigation.

2004-2009 — The entire project is to be completed by 2009 once all 26 generators will be able to generate power.

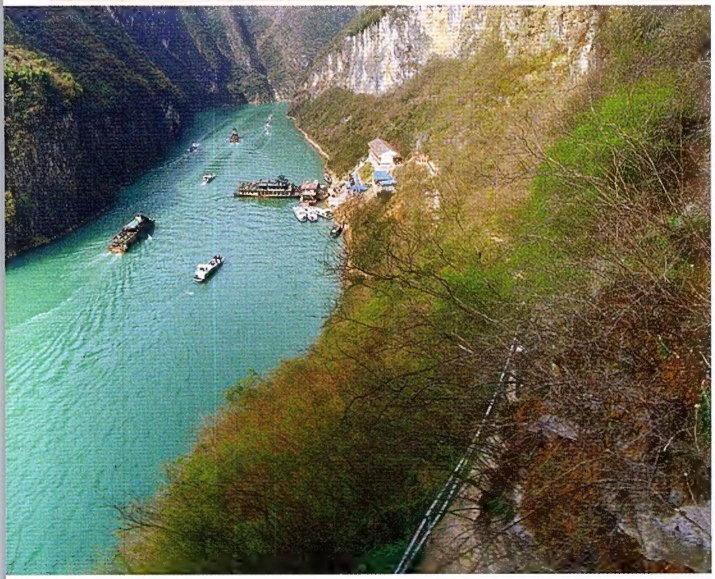
MAIN ATTRACTIONS

The Yangtze River cleaves a path and makes its way through the mountains to form the magnificent Three Gorges: Qutang Gorge, Wuxia Gorge, and Xiling Gorge. Sandwiched between the mountains on the mid part of the Yangtze River, the Three Gorges runs across Fengjie and Wushan Mountain in Sichuan Province and Badong, Zigui, and Yichang in Hubei Province, extending 190 km long.

1. Qutang Gorge

Starting from Baidicheng and ending at Daixi Township, Qutang Gorge is 8 km long. It is known for its splendid and overhanging precipices. The Yangtze River cuts through the rocks of the Qiyue Mountains like an axe and flows between the vertical cliffs of some thousand metres high. And since the distance of its two flanks is only a few dozens metres wide, the roaring river pours into this narrow gateway with great momentum.

Covered with mosses and green growth, these cliffs are like green curtains flanking the river. The turbulent river breaking into Kuimen flows onwards closely hugging the rocky canyon. From a boat, the peaks on either side of the river look as if they are joined overhead and the boat is speeding its way in a tunnel.



2. Wuxia Gorge

Wuxia Gorge, the middle section of the Three Yangtze Gorges, extends 40 km from the mouth of Daning River of Wushan Mountain in the west to Badong in the east. It is gifted with exquisite peaks and lush mountains and ranges. Here the river winds its way through the anticline of the Wushan Mountains that extend continuously for 45 km. The rugged peaks on both sides of the river are in a great variety of shapes adorned with ancient trees and vines, vibrant flowers and verdant leaves. As the thunderous river gushes onwards, it churns up a great curtain of mist. At some points, the river seems to be blocked by a vertical cliff right in front, but a sudden turn of the boat brings it to another section of fine scenery.

3. Xiling Gorge

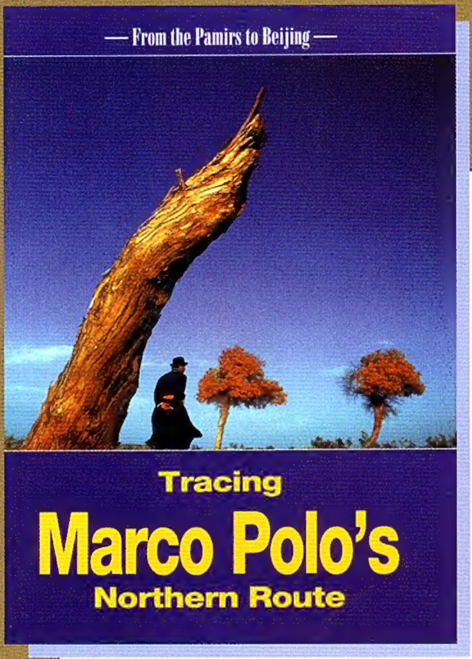
Xiling Gorge is about 75 km long. The whole gorge area is covered with high mountains, gullies, dangerous shoals and hidden reefs of various sizes. One of the most perilous shoals is Qingtan Shoal. It was formed by collapsed craggy cliffs, and surging waves and rapid currents churn over its rocks and stones. Ships going downstream over the shoal would be at an arrow speed, but going back up would be as difficult as climbing a steep hill. The swift current, boiling whirlpools and soaring waves made this section of the Yangtze the graveyard of many a boat in the past. However, the navigation channel has been cleared of obstructions since the liberation in 1949. Today, this section of the gorge can be negotiated safely even at night.

4. The Twelve Peaks of Wushan Mountains

The Twelve Peaks of the Wushan Mountains have been well known since ancient times. Piercing through the sky and towering over the southern and northern sides of Yangtze River, they are all endowed with various fascinating shapes. Among them, the most outstanding peak is the Goddess Peak, where a rich store of mythologies about this particular place has wrapped it in mystery. Cruising down this section of the Three Gorges is like strolling down a picture gallery. Some of the peaks half-hidden behind drifting mists are like inked traditional Chinese paintings, while the rugged peaks piercing into the clouds with vigorous waves below present scenes of the richly coloured oil painting, and the steep-sided and vertical-walled mountains are like those in a forcefully executed woodcut print.

Photographic & Practical Guides for Your China Tours

Before you set off for your perfect journey, you may have to prepare your itinerary carefully. Each of the following recommended readings offers different types of information which cater to our readers' various interests: exploring, photography, or tourist information. They will be great guides to your China tours.


— From the Pamirs to Beijing —
Tracing
Marco Polo's
Northern Route

Tracing Marco Polo's Northern Route

A record of an 80-day journey in which our authors drive their jeep 12,000 km long through the northern regions of China following in the footsteps of Macro Polo's historic journey from the Pamir Highland to Beijing. In a medley of images and words, we present you with the fascinating scenery and various ways of life in Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, and Tibet.

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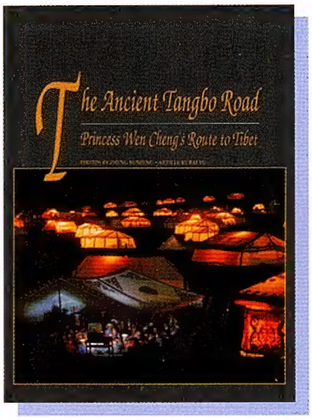

The Ancient Tangbo Road
Princess Wen Cheng's Route to Tibet

The Ancient Tangbo Road

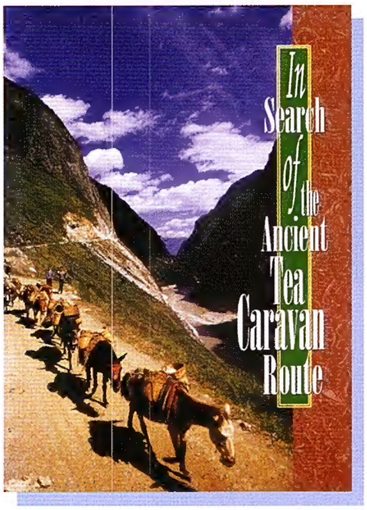
Covering four provinces including Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, and the Tibet Autonomous Region, the ancient Tangbo Road was created on the map when Princess Wen Cheng was sent as a bride to Luoxie (present-day Lhasa) during the Tang Dynasty. Our photographers and writers, who have followed this arduous route, present you the graceful sights and unique ethnic customs on the way.

HK$192

In Search of the Ancient Tea Caravan Route

The ancient Tea Caravan Route can be traced back to 2,000 years ago, starting from Xishuangbanna at China's southwestern end, passing through boundless forests and valleys to the Sino-Indian, Nepalese and Sikkimese borders on Tibet, the "Roof of the World". This book is not-to-be-missed by every daring adventurer.

HK$192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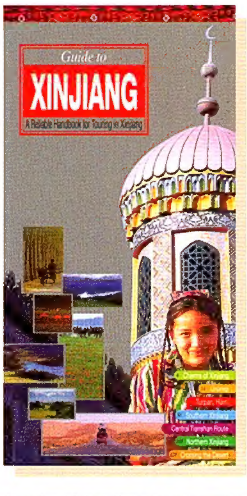
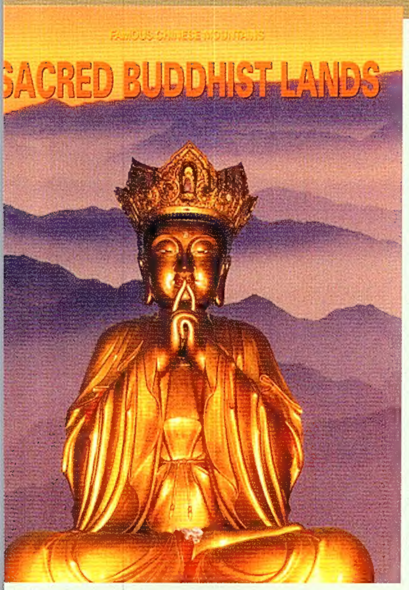

Guide to
XINJIANG
A Reliable Handbook for Touring in Xinjiang

Guide to Xinjiang

This book is especially designated for DIY travellers who desire to explore the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. There are detailed introduction to scenic spots in five main areas in Xinjiang including Urümqi, Turpan, Southern and Northern Xinjiang, and Central Tianshan. Practical tourist information on accommodation, ticketing, shopping, local specialty, as well as travel tips are covered.

HK$96

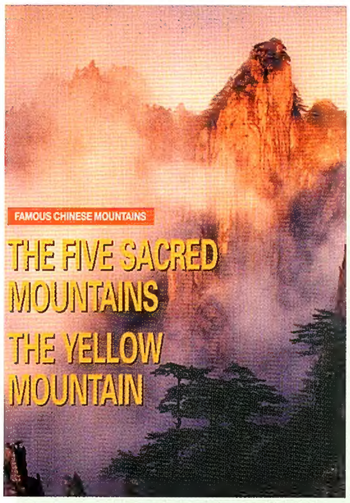


Sacred Buddhist Lands

Buddhism in China is inevitably linked with some of the country's best known mountains. And going deep in the mountains and far away from civilization is an ideal place for retreat. Belonging to the four Bodhisattvas respectively, the four most famous Buddhist mountains — Wutai, Jiuhua, Putuo and Emei — are nestled with numerous monasteries and nunneries which have been worshipped by pilgrims for thousands of years. Tourists to these places will totally be soaked in "Kingdoms of Buddhism".

HK$156

The Five Sacred Mountains
The Yellow Mountain



Located in five provinces in China, every of the Five Sacred Mountains — Taishan, Hengshan, Songshan, Hengshan and Huashan — has its magnificent natural and cultural landscapes. Besides, Huangshan (Yellow Mountain), is also famous for its spectacular rocks, pine trees, and sea of clouds. It will be a great enjoyment in reading both the detailed text and remarkable images by our experienced photographers as recorded in this book.

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